

The Seattle Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
12:00 p.m. Thursday, May 30, 2024

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

Remote Listen Line:

Dial: 213-282-4570 / Phone conference ID: 147 037 290#

Watch Live:

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

Meeting ID: 232 344 205 015 / Passcode: xuxTiN

-To submit public comment in writing, email: library.board@spl.org.

-To provide public comment in person at the Central Library, sign up in the meeting room.

-To provide public comment remotely, join meeting with link above and enter your full name in Q&A.

Agenda

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. CONSENT

1. Minutes of April 25, 2024 Regular Library Board Meeting
2. April 2024 Finance Report

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

1. Chief Librarian Report
2. System Report
 - a. Automated Materials Handling System Update: Charles Wesley, Library Technology Officer

F. OLD BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. First Quarter 2024 Levy Report
2. Union Report
3. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
4. Updates from Library Board Members

H. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. ADJOURN

J. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: June 27, 2024

(For more information, call Laura Gentry, head of the Communications Office, at 206-915-9028.)

Unapproved Board Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

The Seattle Public Library

April 25, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on April 25, 2024. Library Board President Tali Hairston called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. Vice President Yazmin Mehdi and trustees Carmen Bendixen, Ron Chew, and Jay Reich were in attendance. The meeting was conducted with a remote attendance option via video conference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

CONSENT

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

CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

Chief Librarian Report

Executive Director and Chief Librarian Tom Fay said the Library's All Staff Day was held on March 27 during which Employee Recognition Awards were given to this year's winners. Mr. Fay said nominations are made by peers and colleagues throughout the system, and he noted the list of award categories and recipients in the meeting packet. Mr. Fay said it was a busy month for media, and he and Northwest Regional Manager Dawn Rutherford were guests on The Bridge radio show hosted by former Seattle City Council member Jean Godden and cohost Julianna Ross. He said this month he also attended the Public Library Association conference in Columbus, OH, which was a good opportunity to talk to colleagues and library directors on a number of national topics. Mr. Fay said he attended the April 18 Leschi Book Fair and Family Literacy Night at Leschi Elementary School. He said the event was planned by Informal Learning Program Manager Amy Twito, children's librarians Mynique Adams, Lauren Mayer, and Jessica Werner, and teen librarian Alicia Garcia, in partnership with Leschi Elementary, and staff at South End Stories including retired principal Dr. Donald Felder. He said children in attendance were able to choose 10 free books to take home from an amazing supply of books covering a broad range of interests.

Mr. Fay said April marks the one-year anniversary of SPL's participation in the Books Unbanned program. He said SPL worked together with Brooklyn Public Library and students at the University of Washington's iSchool to produce a report. He encouraged trustees to read the report at the link provided in the meeting packet. He thanked The Seattle Public Library Foundation for generously funding the program. He said participating libraries are setting up a consistent meeting schedule to touch base, and he applauded Brooklyn Public Library's Chief Librarian Nick Higgins for his continued work and stewardship of the group.

Library Board Trustee Jay Reich asked for a summary of the Library's presentation to the City Council earlier in the day. Mr. Fay said Literature and Humanities Program Manager Stesha Brandon

gave a great presentation on the 2024 Seattle Reads program. He said the second presentation and the key focus of the meeting was the Library's presentation of the 2023 Levy Report. He said Councilmembers also had an interest in the reduced hours and the hiring freeze. He said he appreciates Councilmember Rivera for being a good partner as the chair of the Committee. Mr. Fay said he drew attention to the fact that the Library's operating levy is truly intertwined with the General Fund, especially for items like hours added in the 2019 levy when it was put together. He said the added hours were predicated on 2019 funding levels and staffing levels, which is why additional hours have been difficult to manage. He said one of the other assumptions designed into the 2019 levy was a 4% inflationary factor; however, through 2023, the cumulative inflation is nearly 23% versus the 17% projected. Mr. Fay said inflation, construction, and issues around staffing including leaves, vacancies from the hiring freeze, and additional budget reductions have compounded difficulties. He said the Library does not have the same buying power with levy funds as it had in 2019. Mr. Fay said Councilmembers had many good questions about hours, e-books, and programming.

Library Board Vice President Yazmin Mehdi said Mr. Fay and Councilmember Rivera did a terrific job and Councilmember Rivera also did a great job of understanding what the Library is facing. Ms. Mehdi said there are two issues that are pressing, the first being that the history of the levy, because the Library is a General Fund department. She said it's not just that the levy is entwined with the General Fund, but rather than the Library was a fully General Fund funded department with the exception of capital, so it is important to tell that history. She said secondly, she found a comment made by Councilmember Rivera interesting; she said Councilmember Rivera commented that the Library has to provide social services in a way it never had to before and it would be nice to get back to the Library as an information provider. Ms. Mehdi said it is important to acknowledge the reality that the Library is now a social service agency, and if that is going to be acknowledged, then the Library needs to have the resources to properly provide that assistance. She said this context is important as SPL moves forward with its Strategic Plan, so that the plan is realistic about the role the Library is playing and also realistic about the fact that the Library is really a General Fund department which has not been funded due to a number of funding issues outside of the Library's control. Mr. Fay agreed with Ms. Mehdi, saying the Library was a General Fund department that needed to do an operating levy due to the Great Recession in 2012, at which time many obligations were loaded into the initial levy. He said while the levy dollars look like a large number, only \$2 million of the \$13.1 million levy provides additional operating hours from 2019. He said because of the increase in social service needs, SPL has needed to put additional Security personnel on levy funds, as General Fund dollars were not available. He said this indicates a need for more resources, as well as a draw on current resources to fund these priorities.

Library Board President Tali Hairston agreed Mr. Fay did a great job in the presentation accentuating the strategy for SPL's social service work and the excellence of the staff who are addressing those needs. He said libraries managing social services is not new to those who have been stewarding the Library. He said SPL has already been doing good work, preparing staff, developing relationships with the community, and making a community effort with the Library as a hub to many partners and social services agencies. He said the information was well-stated and an honored the work of the community beyond the Library. Mr. Fay said SPL can't do it without the community. He said there are multifaceted issues and it takes everyone coming together to make impact. Mr. Fay said in the next levy and through strategic planning, the Library hopes to figure out how do to the work with the right amount of resources, being planful about how to create impact and show success. He said staff and those receiving services need to see successes, not just attempts. He said sometimes the Library can only do something at a limited level, and sometimes the Library is not the lead when another City department or community organization might be better qualified. He said SPL will fit in as the hub in the network to accentuate partners and other City departments to solve challenges and have impact.

Systems Reports

2024 Summer of Learning

Mr. Fay introduced Youth and Family Learning Services Informal Learning Program Manager Amy Twito. Ms. Twito said the 2024 Summer of Learning program would be starting in June, at an exact date yet to be determined. She said the program goal is to encourage youth to read for enjoyment, learn new skills, and explore fun activities over the summer through participation with an activity booklet, programs, and book giveaways. She said SPL is collaborating with partners at South End Stories, including Dr. Donald Felder and the principal and staff at Leschi School. She said the foundational themes of this year's program are intellectual freedom and racial equity. She said recent book bans and challenges, particularly against BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ authors and stories, have shown that the themes cannot be separated from one another. She said the program will approach the topic lightly with a kid-friendly perspective in the Summer Action Guide. Ms. Twito said the Reading Tracker in the Summer Action Guide is designed to be a fun game board in which youth are encouraged to set reading goals for the summer. She said a survey included in last year's action guide received 213 responses from youth in kindergarten through 5th grade representing more than 75 schools and homeschooled children. She said 73% of respondents reported that they set a summer reading goal for themselves; and of those who set a goal, 94% reported that they met or exceeded their goal. She said goals ranged from reading 5 minutes a day, to every night before bed, to reading 100 books over the summer; with 40% setting a goal of 20 to 30 minutes of reading a day.

Ms. Twito said Summer of Learning continues to offer programming with community partners to reach prioritized audiences who are furthest away from educational justice including Black, indigenous, and youth of color, as well as LGBTQIA+ youth, immigrants and refugees, and insecurely housed youth and families. She said the number of programs for the general public in branches will also be expanded, depending upon staff capacity and branch hours. She said 100% of program presenters and teaching artists are Black, indigenous and people of color. She said the Library again plans to give away 10,000 to 12,000 books this summer. Ms. Twito said children need access to home libraries, and the element of choice has a huge impact on the kids reading. She said the Library wants to increase home libraries to measure how that impacts the time that kids spend reading and their enjoyment of reading. She said the April 18 Leschi Book Fair, kids most in need of reading support in first through third grades were able to choose 15 books each to take home, and their parents, caregivers and siblings also got to choose books to take home. She said the project includes a pre-evaluation and post-evaluation to measure the impacts of books in home libraries on time spent reading, enjoyment of reading, and reading scores later in the year. She said one of the benefits of partnering directly with a school is the ability to follow the progress of participating kids. Ms. Twito said the Library will continue this partnership by also offering a summer enrichment reading program for the same students in which teens will be hired to read with students. She said the high school students will receive training and support as well as a stipend and service learning credit. She said the long term goal is to improve third grade reading scores at Leschi Elementary, and if successful, to expand this model to other schools.

Ms. Twito said she will be retiring later this summer or early fall and she thanked the Board for their support for the Summer of Learning program for the past 22 years. She said support of youth programming has changed lives. Library Board trustee Carmen Bendixen thanked Ms. Twito for her years of work, support, enthusiasm, and spreading the word of the Library's good work through Summer of Learning. She said she is excited for this year's program and also sad to learn it is Ms. Twito's last program. Mr. Reich congratulated Ms. Twito on her work. He asked if Summer of Learning is a national program done across the country. Ms. Twito said most libraries offer a summer reading program, but very few have the level of support of SPL's program. She said before the pandemic, SPL held hundreds of programs at its libraries all summer long. She said SPL has a very strong network of teaching artists and programmers. She said she also feels very honored that SPL is

able to pay a fair wage to all the people it works with on the program, particularly as it finds more Black and Brown presenters who reflect the children, cultures, and families in the priority audience. She said the Library is walking the walk, not just talking the talk, and it is an honor to be able to do that work. Ms. Mehdi said she sees a big difference in how the program has evolved over the past 22 years, and how the Library is approaching teaching kids with the most need to read and enjoy reading. Ms. Mehdi thanked Ms. Twito for all she has done for children and their parents across the city, particularly in addressing the learning gap that occurs between the spring and the fall. Ms. Mehdi congratulated Ms. Twito on her upcoming retirement and thanked her for introducing her to the music of Nina Simone. Mr. Fay said Ms. Twito has done a huge service for the community. He said as the Library has developed programs and made a progressive effort to focus them around equity, Ms. Twito's work has made a big impact; he thanked her for all the work she has done.

Ms. Twito said she thinks one of the biggest things that drives the success of SPL's programming is community engagement. She said it is very important for librarians to get out into the community and make deep connections to create planning partnerships for programs that go beyond being transactional. She said these partnerships create community-based and community-built programming in which partners participate on the planning committee and run meetings with community members and partners. She said she sees this work starting to happen with teen librarians and staff in the Southwest Region where they are doing similar work where they have co-designed programs with community partners in a very exciting way. Ms. Twito said community engagement needs to be front and center and should be prioritized, even in light of the current hiring freeze. She said it is incumbent upon the success of programming to keep the momentum going for Library staff to be able to get out of the buildings and engage with community partners. Ms. Twito said she appreciates the support of the Board and encouraged everyone to go home and listen to Nina Simone.

OLD BUSINESS

2023 Annual Levy Report

Mr. Hairston said the Board approved the 2023 Annual Levy Report at the March meeting. He said there had been a subsequent change to one number on page 11 of the report before transmittal to the mayor and City Council. He said the updated report is included in the meeting packet for the historical record, and no Board action is required.

NEW BUSINESS

Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Fay introduced Strategy and Policy Advisor Jessica Smith and strategic planning consultant Greg Netzer from Territory Northwest. Mr. Fay said the Board will have a working session in late May to do further work and address additional questions. He said the full plan will likely be ready for approval in June or July. Mr. Fay said the plan is a framework for 10 years looking at a number of factors in play including the budget and an upcoming levy. He said the framework is designed to take advantage of opportunities while keeping guidelines and specific priority actions and outcomes in mind as the Library builds the many components that will require assessments or evaluation. He said many of the major initiatives will require implementation plans that include thoughtful planning around budget, resources and staff to do the work at scale moving forward. He said the guidelines and framework will help the Library build the next levy. He said there will be two levies within the life of this plan, so the Library must think systematically as it works through each.

Ms. Smith said the strategic plan is a framework that needs to balance the current environment while being flexible and modular to embrace the inspirational and aspirational nature of the future. She said it is an important tool to guide and prioritize work toward a vision that contains shared goals, values, activities and approaches to achieving that vision and transforming the organization as a society and a community. She said in an era of change, advancement, uncertainty and pressure, library work is

changing, and SPL faces many new challenges and opportunities. She said it is an important time to reassess the Library's priorities, role in the community, and the way it works. Ms. Smith said looking forward over the next 10 years, the Library will have a role as a community connector, facilitator, partner, organizer, and even a funder in its community. She said the Library will seek to build organized and well-informed networks of community support and resources where they are most needed. Ms. Smith said over the next 10 years, the strategic plan will occur in three phases, the first of which begins this year and will focus on assessments and improvements to programming and resources. She said as the Library plans for the next levy, phase two will focus on the levy renewal and what priority actions the Library can begin to implement. She said phase three looks at capital bonds, long term funding, and how the Library can set itself up for stability and success while moving through biennial budget cycles and leading to a 2033 levy.

Mr. Netzer said the Library's strategic planning process is interesting because the Library already had an existing mission and vision that were very sound. He said as the team took information from the Futures Report and began conversations about the future vision, they started to pay attention to the language of the mission in considering the Library's audience and what the Library needs to provide in terms of different kinds of access and changes in how information is presented. He said the team looked at the idea of a central hub and how the Library could be a connector among different parts of the community, and then worked backwards to think about the foundational statements and planning. He said, in the end, the statements are very tight while acknowledging a new level of complexity with which the Library will engage with its people for the next 10 years.

Mr. Netzer said the team spent a great deal of time re-establishing values through a very rigorous process. He said a sub-team did an enormous amount of research into how other libraries and organizations across the country framed the way they talk about values and priorities. He said the team was challenged to keep the list to five, and came back with three: Care, Connection, and Curiosity. He said the three were clearly reasoned and connected to the way SPL will lean into its priorities, and stayed unchanged throughout most of the process. He said toward the end of the process, "Curiosity" was replaced with "Learning" to address some negative reactions to the word curiosity. Mr. Netzer said while guidelines and values tend to be core beliefs or ideals to guide behavior, principles are rules to ensure decisions are made in a specific way. He said the Library's two principles are Equity and Intellectual Freedom. He said the principles are a second level beyond values, and signal that specific attention will be paid to maintaining this focus in all areas of the plan.

Ms. Smith said the team used the Theory of Change framework to guide the development of the strategic plan, starting with the impact the Library wants to see in the community, and working backward to narrow elements, such as resources needed to conduct the activities that will lead to the outcomes that will support the impacts. She said the plan has Community Impacts that will lead to a stronger sense of community belonging and Organizational Impacts, specific to the SPL's operations that will lead to stronger stability and organizational resiliency in the future. She said within the Community Impact areas are: Literacy, Enrichment and Empowerment; and within Organizational Impacts are: Funding, Increased Capacity, and Buildings, Technology and Sustainability.

Ms. Smith said under the community impact of Literacy, the Library commits to helping people access the skills, resources and opportunities they need to read, learn and navigate their lives; and will work with partners to build networks of support that lead to positive impacts for multiple literacies. She said the strategic plan pairs outcomes with priority actions. She said the top two priority actions for Literacy are expanding programs and services for children and youth; and maintaining and introducing new programs supporting financial, digital, educational, medical and other literacies. Ms. Smith said under the community impact of Empowerment, the Library commits to helping people build confidence and skills to pursue and achieve their life goals, and will prioritize

inclusivity and accessibility, as they are key to empowerment for all. She said a priority action is to incorporate accessibility policies as a standard practice for all Library programs and services, which pairs with an outcome of providing community access to accessible and inclusive collections, programs, services and spaces that celebrate intellectual freedom and personal expression. She said another priority action is to assess and respond to the availability of digital access and literacy programs, which pairs with the outcome that digital literacy programming will narrow the digital divide through 2033 and beyond. Ms. Smith said under the community impact of Enrichment, the Library commits to providing collections, programs, services and spaces that enhance and bring joy and connection to people's lives. She said a priority action is to build programs that encourage self-expression through art, writing and other creative activities, which pairs with the outcome that the Library will champion and celebrate the joy of reading in its programs and physical and digital collections. She said another priority action is to showcase local experts and artists to strengthen the community sense of place and belonging, which pairs with the outcome that the Library will champion and celebrate experiences that build community and cultivate a sense of belonging.

Ms. Smith said the organizational impacts are about how the Library does the work, which will be visual and impactful internally. She said under the organizational impact of Funding, the Library commits to exploring alternative and additional funding resources beyond the City's General Fund and seven-year levies. She said a priority action is to assess the impact of levy funds on collections, programs, services, infrastructure and community reach, which has the paired outcome of developing a 2026 levy proposal to support the community's library needs. She said another priority action is to ensure strategic organizational alignment with the Foundation and Friends; and to advocate in partnership with the Friends and Foundation for the benefits and importance of libraries. She said under the organizational impact of Capacity, which includes internal staff capacity as well as external capacity with partnerships, the Library's commitment is to building organizational capacity through new recruitment, hiring and training approaches, as well as improved systems and processes, seeking to be a desirable workplace and an employer of choice in the community. She said a priority action is to assess current organizational structure, staff roles and skill sets and determine what changes are needed to support our vision, which pairs with the outcome of building capacity to stabilize operations and improve access to Library offerings. She said another priority action is to increase capacity for more community outreach, engagement and program development, which pairs with the outcome of enhancing staff empowerment, communication, training, development and upward mobility. Ms. Smith said the last organizational impact is Buildings, Technology and Sustainability. She said the Library commits to decreasing its carbon footprint by implementing sustainable practices in the maintenance and upgrades of SPL buildings and technologies, and that Library technology will improve the patron experience in person and online. She said a priority action for buildings is to evaluate community usage of current SPL locations and determine whether changes are needed, which pairs with the outcome of creating accessible and culturally responsive library spaces. She said a priority action for technology is to provide fast and reliable technology, including hardware, software and Internet access, with an outcome of offering access to modern technologies with an emphasis on reducing the digital divide. She said a priority action for sustainability is to develop and implement a plan to move all SPL locations away from fossil fuels, with an outcome of reducing SPL's carbon footprint by meeting or exceeding the City's carbon reduction goals.

Ms. Smith said the Library will need resources to focus on the three main community impacts and three main organizational impacts, as well as the actions to achieve outcomes. Mr. Fay said the resources generally needed to run the Library today are: Funding, Staffing, Collections, Partnerships, and Buildings and Technology. Regarding funding, he said defining resources through assessments and data analysis can help build implementation plans for creating sustainable programs and systems that are not prone to destruction through budget cycles. He said some things can be tried short-term, and some need to be taken to scale long term in an initiative that has life through five or more years.

Mr. Fay said there are a variety of funding mechanisms including avenues for State and Federal funding, and the Library needs to work more with the Foundation as they continue to grow and move their strategic plan in line with the Library's. Regarding staffing, Mr. Fay said SPL needs to have the right staff with the right skill sets and aptitudes to do current work as well as work, programs, and initiatives envisioned for the future. Regarding collections, he said there is a need to secure greater financial resources, and to be more efficient in purchasing and more thoughtful in policies around use. He said SPL needs to look out 10 years and determine how much larger the collection budget needs to be, realizing a drive toward e-materials. He said SPL needs to consider how it can support education through its collections in a different way than it is today. He said the Library needs to think about how to take initiatives to scale, working with the school system, to make sure they have classroom sets that are meaningful, especially in the Title 1 schools. He said the Library needs to move beyond a scarcity mindset to consider what can be done through planning an iterative process with multiple levies that are linked and driving toward impacts and outcomes being sought. He said assessments, evaluation, and implementation planning will be necessary, much of which needs to be done in some regard for the next levy effort in the upcoming two years. He said staff has begun that process internally, and trustees will be asked to participate in a core team to develop the levy.

Ms. Smith said Phase 1 of the strategic plan will include assessments and improvements toward increasing digital equity support for children, teens and young adults, as well as assessing finance, buildings and operations. She said this will help to identify what resources are needed for the next levy. She said Phase 2 is implementing identified priority actions, identifying other priority actions needed, and using the levy renewal to make that happen. She said Phase 3 is looking at capital bonds and long term funding toward maintenance, upgrades, and new facility types if necessary. She said this work will be done in partnership with the Foundation and Friends, fundraising, and working through biennial budgets and future levies.

Mr. Reich said he thinks the framework is excellent. He asked how it will be disseminated and communicated with partners, potential allies and funders, and political people to share the thoughtful way the Library has considered this future in order to build a foundation for political action and partnerships that will be required. He also asked how the Library will implement the plan, and whether implementation will require a number of committees and resources. He said he would like to get a sense of how this is translated into proposals for budget, levy and staffing. Mr. Fay said at the Board's next strategic planning workshop, Marketing and Communications staff will show a visual layout and representation of the plan. He said different pieces of the plan can be disseminated to partners depending on the area of focus. He said there is an ability to be modular and focused on certain areas and partners. Regarding implementation, Mr. Fay said as the Library moves through levy planning, it will look at priority actions to determine needed resources. He said part of the process will require a core team and a few other groups. He said this work will be ongoing and is designed to allow opportunities to present themselves for action. He said, for example, an implementation plan for Digital Equity and the Youth and Family Learning plan are both finished and may need to be adjusted to fully align, but the Library is ready to move forward on that work. He said SPL hasn't always been as self-evaluative as it should be to dig deep in assessments and make sure it engages with partners and the community in the entire process. He said public and community partner input is what will make the work strong. Mr. Reich said political support will be necessary. He said there is an environment of scarcity and the Library is competing for resources. He said the plan helps position the Library to make credible, thoughtful asks and rally people for support. He said he wants people to share the Library's pride and vote for implementation. He said there is a political opportunity and imperative to share, communicate, and position the Library to win.

Food and Beverages in the Library Administrative Procedure Update

Mr. Fay said the Board does not have to take action on this procedure, but the information is being

shared because the procedure is a significant change. Assistant Director of Public Services Darth Nielsen said the new procedure is shifting how the Library is thinking about food in the libraries. He said the current administrative procedure guiding food and beverage consumption states that eating is not allowed in the Library except in designated areas. He said those designated areas include specified areas on Levels 3 and 5 of the Central Library, and a café space in the Lake City Branch. Mr. Nielsen said a change is needed in order to meet the way the community is using the Library for social services needs and basic needs. He said enforcing a ‘no eating in the Library’ procedure has also exacerbated patron interactions. He said the Library wants to create a shift its enforcement actions to make sure it is providing for basic needs in a shared environment while also protecting Library assets. Mr. Nielsen said the new language will state that food is allowed in the Library except in designated spaces. He said areas where food will not be allowed will be at computer stations, at scanning and copying areas, and in collections spaces, including Special Collections. He said there may be other places SPL might want to designate as non-eating spaces in the future. He said the change gives staff tools to provide a welcoming environment to the community, and gives the community different ways to meet their needs in the Library. He said it positions the Library in good partnership for providing for needs, such as the successful Coffee and Conversations program and the Hunger Intervention program. Mr. Nielsen said the change may impact the janitorial and custodial workflow, and staff will need to have the ability to interact with disruptive behavior. He said the procedure is a shift, and trustees are asked for feedback or concerns. Ms. Mehdi said she supports changing the rule from designating places patrons may eat to specifying places they may not eat. She suggested that Marketing staff create a fun video so that the rule is clear and easy to understand.

Union Report

President of AFSCME Local 2083 Anne Cisney said after serving 14 years as Union President, she will be moving to the Vice President of Librarians chair, which is a great opportunity to give somebody else the opportunity to step into the president role. She thanked the Board for all of the projects worked on together and the opportunities to get to know the trustees and be present in their meetings. She said next month she will introduce the incoming president, Northeast Branch Teen Librarian Jessica Lucas. Mr. Hairston thanked Ms. Cisney for her years of service and leadership and was appreciative of her continued involvement in the union. Mr. Fay said being a Union president is one of the most challenging roles, and Ms. Cisney has always managed it with grace, collegiality, professionalism and spirit of collaboration, even during pretty challenging projects over the years. He said Ms. Lucas will also be a great leader, and management looks forward to continued collaboration.

Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates

Mr. Hairston said the Foundation Board did not meet this month. Ms. Mehdi said at the Friends Board meeting, two of their four new board members were in attendance. She said the Friends signed a lease for a new location in Georgetown and will begin moving mid-May with a soft opening planned on May 16. She said first quarter 2024 sales have exceeded goals in all three of their locations at the FriendShop, Georgetown, and Lander Street Vintage. Mr. Hairston said the presidents of all three boards also held a good meeting during the past week.

ADJOURN

Board President Tali Hairston adjourned the meeting at 1:33 p.m.



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: May 30, 2024

To: The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees

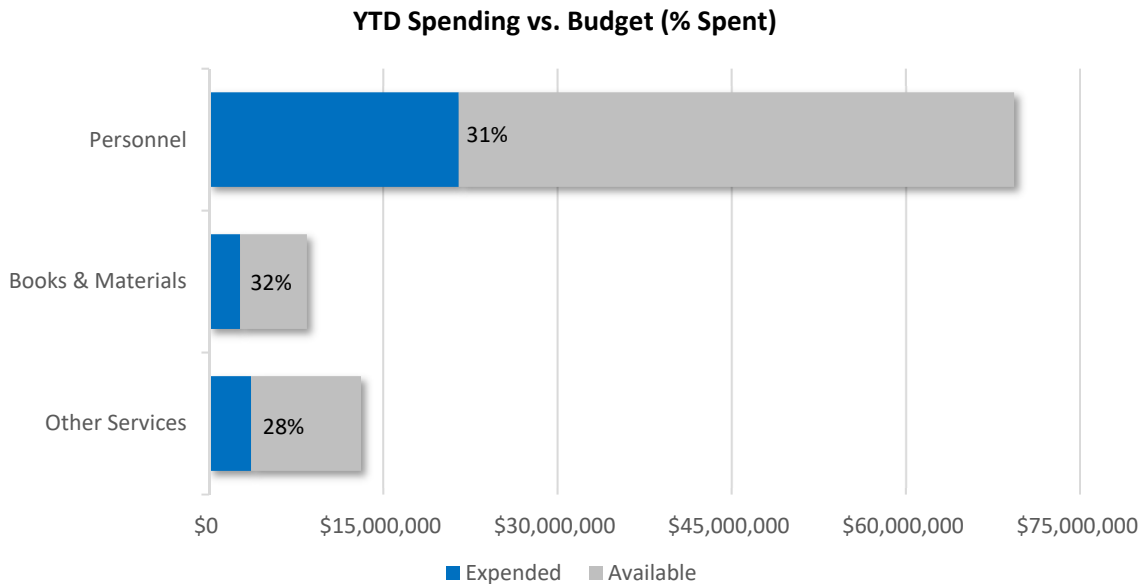
From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services
Nicholas Merkner, Head of Finance and Accounting

Subject: **April 2024 Financial Reporting**

Overview

Overall, the Library has expended **31%** of its operating budget with **33%** of the year elapsed. This is in line with the prior year when the Library had expended **30%** of the operating budget. Total expenditures at the end of the month were \$27.8 million.

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



Personnel Services

Personnel costs represent the largest category of expenses at the Library and make up 76% of the revised operating budget. As of this report there have been **nine pay periods processed** (with the first pay period of the year split between 2023 and 2024, resulting in only two days from that pay period charged to the current year)—as such we expect 32% of the personnel budget to be expended. Actual year-to-date personnel spending is **31%**.

Hiring Freeze

As noted in the March 2024 Board Financial Report, the Mayor’s Office provided guidance to all City departments relating to a hiring freeze as of January. The guidance limited any new hiring efforts and required that a specific hiring freeze exception be granted. The Library Board of Trustees maintains control over positions at the Library and has the authority to institute its own hiring policies. Even so, to address budget challenges facing the Library system, we implemented a hiring freeze in tandem with the City’s hiring freeze mandated for executive branch departments.

Chief Librarian Tom Fay has approved several exemptions to the hiring freeze to help with our service levels, including hiring some intermittent staff to help keep branches open. We are in close communication with the Mayor’s Office as we work through the budget process to better understand any impacts to our General Fund allocation in the 2025-2026 City budget.

Non-Personnel Services

The largest individual category of expenditures within the non-personnel budget is related to library books and materials—this category represents 9% of the revised operating budget. Spending is as expected at **32%**.

Other services which represent 15% of the adopted budget—and include equipment, services, and supplies—are **28%** expended.

Revenues

Library generated revenues for the period under review are **\$104,000**—bringing year-to-date collection to **\$287,000** (36% of our target). This amount is well above revenue recorded during the same period in 2023 (\$238,000) owing to two specific reasons:

- Event Services hosted a large conference at the Central Library in April, leading to revenues which exceeded projections for the month
- The Library received \$14,000 in insurance proceeds to offset a portion of repair costs associated with a vehicle strike at the Ballard Library. The remainder of the balance will be repaid via terms outlined via a Promissory Note.

Month-to-month collections for Lost Materials, Parking Garage Fees, and Print/Copy Services are either on target or exceeding expectations.

Action Requested: Library Board consideration of April 2024 Operating Budget financial reporting for approval at May 30, 2024 meeting. Comments or feedback are welcome.

Expenditure Control for April 2024

Amounts in \$1,000s	Revised Budget*	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries	44,944	3,590	13,694	30%	31,250
Benefits	24,378	2,016	7,816	32%	16,562
Personnel Services Sub-Total	\$69,322	\$5,606	\$21,510	31%	\$47,812
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,428	613	2,666	32%	5,762
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	\$8,428	\$613	\$2,666	32%	\$5,762
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	3,027	249	999	33%	2,028
Equipment - IT & Facilities	1,801	150	647	36%	1,155
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	308	15	64	21%	244
Operating Supplies	559	53	139	25%	419
Other Expenses	641	20	122	19%	520
Other Maintenance	799	6	146	18%	653
Phone, Wireless & Internet	486	61	114	24%	371
Professional Services	502	43	80	16%	422
Software	874	6	290	33%	583
Staff Training & Travel	185	11	23	13%	162
Vehicle Costs	319	25	98	31%	221
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	1,977	99	667	34%	1,310
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,212	62	220	18%	992
Facilities - Garage Debt Service	403	-	15	4% (A)	388
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	\$13,092	\$802	\$3,624	28%	\$9,468
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	\$90,842	\$7,021	\$27,800	31%	\$63,042

Footnotes:

* Includes \$1M related to prior year encumbrances and grant carry-forward

(A) The City is anticipated to post the entire Garage Debt Service chargeback in Q4

Revenue Control for April 2024

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	115,000	8,460	38,269	33%
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	345,000	32,782	117,410	34%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	95,000	10,135	38,097	40%
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	162,000	32,197	58,414	36%
Book Sale Consignment	85,000	6,221	20,423	24%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	3,000	14,468	14,674	489% (A)
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES				
	\$805,000	\$104,263	\$287,286	36%

Footnotes:

(A) Insurance proceeds check received to offset portion of repair cost related to Ballard Library vehicle strike



The Seattle Public Library

Date: May 30, 2024
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Re: May 2024 Chief Librarian's Report

1. During National Volunteer Week, the last week of April, Library Programs and Services Director Kai Tang and I visited several branches throughout the system during Homework Help sessions to engage with Library volunteers and thank them for their invaluable service to the Library and our patrons. The Library's impact is made stronger through volunteer efforts and community partnerships that strengthen bonds and embed services within our community.
2. On May 1, the 2024 Seattle Reads program launched with a launch party and events preview at the Central Library. The event included a panel presentation about how the Library and partner organizations have collaborated on programming around the book, and why Octavia E. Butler's "*Parable of the Sower*" is still so resonant in 2024. We are excited about this year's unique opportunity to provide community-led programming throughout the city with deep community engagement from many community partner organizations.
3. On May 2, Acting Chief Amy Smith and several staff from the City's CARE Community Crisis Responder Team met with Administrative Services Director Rob Gannon, Security Services Supervisor Chris Hogan, Downtown Region Assistant Managing Librarian Dan Tilton, and me to discuss ways for the Library and CARE team to partner to respond to the increased number of patrons needing social services supports at Library locations.
4. On May 9, Foundation Board Member Gene Chang hosted a fundraising event in support of the World Languages Collection. The event was a great success and raised more than \$12,000 that will go toward the Library's World Languages Collection with an emphasis on purchasing more Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) materials. The Library deeply appreciates the engagement and generosity of Foundation Board members and donors who help provide needed resources for the diverse communities we serve.
5. On May 13, I participated in a panel discussion with Representative Adam Smith, author of "*Lost and Broken: My Journey Back from Chronic Pain and Crippling Anxiety*." The Foundation hosted this program, moderated by Taylor Blatchford, reporter for The Seattle Times' Mental Health Project, and presented during Mental Health Awareness Month. Libraries play a key role in addressing the mental health challenges impacting our entire community.

6. On May 14, I gave a presentation at the Rainier Club on the Library's Plan for the Future where I discussed the new, 10-year strategic plan and the Library's work to support community literacy, offer programs and collections that reflect community needs and interests, protect intellectual freedom, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, contribute to the community's sense of belonging, and support a more equitable city.
7. On May 15, Library Programs and Services Director Kai Tang, Policy and Strategy Advisor Jessica Smith, Equity, Learning & Engagement Services Assistant Director Valerie Garrett-Turner, Library Programs and Services Assistant Director Darth Nielsen, Community Partnerships and Government Relations Program Manager Kiersten Nelson, Levy Administrator Jan Oscherwitz, and I met with Department of Neighborhoods Director Jenifer Chao several of her management team to discuss potential partnerships between the Library and Neighborhoods.
8. Book Bingo, Teen Book Bingo, and Loteria de Lectura launched on May 22. This year's Bingo cards were created in partnership with Seattle Arts & Lectures and are attached. We look forward to another great program with lots of excited readers this summer.

Meetings and events during this reporting period:

- a. Board Meetings: Monthly Library Board of Trustees meeting; monthly meeting of Library and Friends leadership; bi-monthly Foundation Board meeting; monthly Friends Board meeting.
- b. Standing Meetings: Compensation Committee; Senior Management Team; Monthly Managers meeting; Union/Leadership meetings; Foundation CEO/Chief Librarian bi-monthly meetings; Strategic Planning Core Team meetings.
- c. Library Talks, Meetings, Interviews and Visits: KCLS Director meetings; Metro area library director meetings; meeting with ULC President/CEO Brooks Rainwater; UW iSchool MLIS Advisory Board meeting; participation in panel discussion with Representative Adam Smith on mental health; presentation to Rainier Club on SPL.
- d. City Meetings, Events and Programs: Mayor's Cabinet Meeting; monthly check-in with Councilmember Rivera; meeting with Deputy Mayor Wong and City department directors; meeting with Acting Chief Amy Smith and Seattle CARE team; meeting with Director Jenifer Chao and Department of Neighborhoods team.
- e. Other: Meeting with Alesha Washington at Seattle Foundation.

BOOK BINGO

ADULT SUMMER READING

2024

Suggested by a Library Worker	In Translation	SAL Speaker (Past or Present)	Queer Joy	Something that Scares You
Body Liberation	Suggested by an Independent Bookseller	Short Story Collection	Environmental	Sky Creatures 
Friendship	Fantastical	FREE	Retelling	Young Adult
LGBTQIA+ Poetry / Essays	BIPOC Romance	Housing / Poverty Justice	Borrowed from a Library	Black Art / Artists
Cozy	One Big Book (400+ pages)		Refugee / Immigrant Memoir	Read in the Sun

10th Year

Presented by Seattle Arts & Lectures and The Seattle Public Library



BOOK BINGO

Teen SUMMER Reading

2024

Childhood Favorite	Picture Book	From a Library or School Booklist	Another Time (Past or Future)	Outside Your Favorite Genre(s)
Supernatural	BIPOC Fantasy or Sci-Fi	Based on Fairytale, Myth, Legend	About Someone You Admire	Made You LOL
Want to Visit (Real or Imagined)	Short 'n Sweet (Short Story / Article / Poetry)	FREE	Nom Nom Nom (Food / Cooking)	Shares Your Identity
Has a Different Identity	About Something You Love	Made into a Show or Movie	Recommended by Someone Else	Read Somewhere New
Try a New Hobby or Activity	A Book Adults Should Read	Chosen by the Title	Read Out Loud	Visit a Library

Presented by Seattle Arts & Lectures and The Seattle Public Library



doodles by @themonaxu

major wheeler honeycrackle

viola glabella

showy fleabane

western wallflower

fairy wings

harebell

wild thyme

maidenhair spleenwort

western sword fern

coropsisir cosmic eye

LOTERÍA DE LECTURA

PARA ADULTOS | 2024

Ciencia ficción (El clarividente)	Libro infantil (El niño)	Misterio (El Caso Cerrado)	Traducido (El políglota)
Leído al aire libre (El pájaro)	Cocina (El comal)	Audiolibros (El actor)	Horror (El chupacabra)
Leyendas y cuentos (La deidad)	Romance (El Cupido)	Recomendados (La biblioteca)	Sucesos recientes (El noticiero)
Libros prohibidos (La chanqueta)	Clásicos (El clásico)	LGBTQIA+ (La bandera)	Lectura gráfica (El pasquín)

Presentado por Seattle Arts & Lectures
y la Biblioteca Pública de Seattle

Ilustrado por
Eliana Vasquez
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LIBRARY AT A GLANCE



IN FOCUS: Tax Help

The Library partners with community organizations to offer Tax Help, assisting community members in preparing their federal returns and claiming millions of dollars in refunds.

Overview: Tax Help

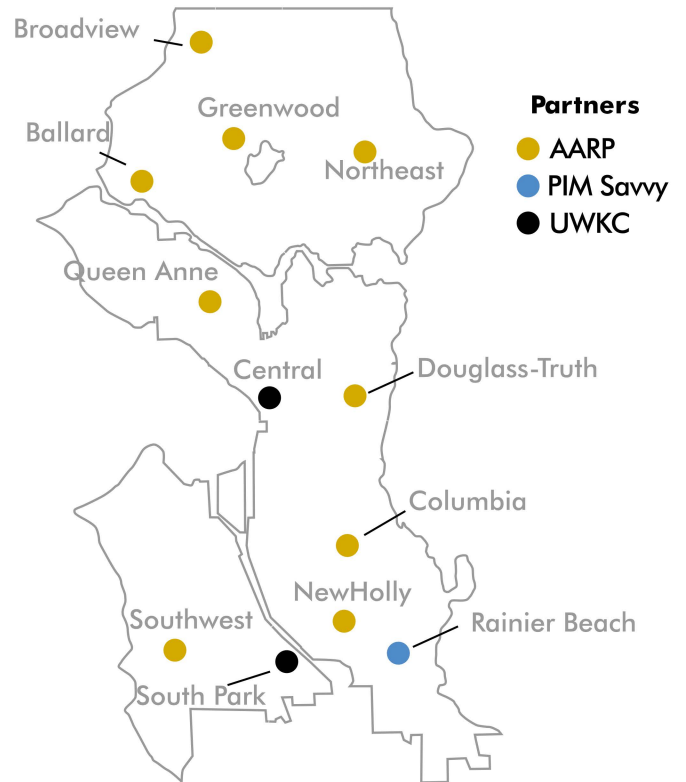
The Library partnered with three organizations — AARP, United Way of King County (UWKC), and PIM Savvy — to provide federal income tax filing assistance this year to 4,600+ people in more than 225 sessions.

Tax Help consists of one-on-one, in-person assistance provided by trained volunteers. It is designed for individuals earning less than \$80,000 per year.

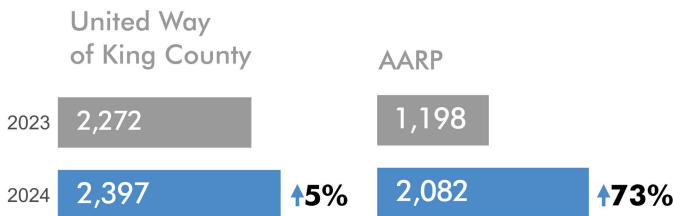
To provide convenient options for accessing Tax Help, assistance was offered on weekdays, on weekends, in the evenings, and in Spanish. Additionally, self-help options were available at three locations.

Patrons who submitted their returns through Tax Help at library locations this year claimed more than \$3.7 million in refunds.

Tax Help at 12 Library Locations



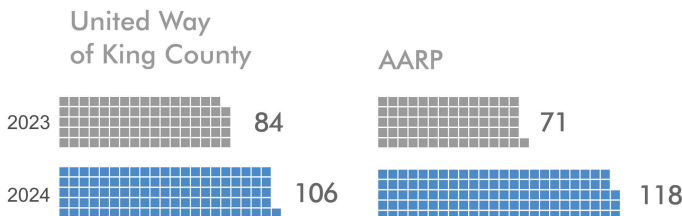
29% Increase in Tax Returns Filed



Overall, the number of returns filed increased by 29 percent over 2023, as patrons returned to in-person services. UWKC resumed in-person tax help after COVID in 2022. AARP resumed in-person service in 2023.

The Library provided dedicated space and session coordination to ensure good coverage of Tax Help across the city.

More Sessions Offered



This year, AARP added weekly Tax Help at the Douglass-Truth, NewHolly, and Columbia branches, and increased weekly sessions at the Southwest Branch. UWKC added additional sessions at its existing library sites.

Enhancing Tax Assistance with Self-Help Options



50+
Self-help tax returns filed

This year, the Library hosted a new self-help tax program where participants learned how to file their own taxes for free. This service included access to computers, free IRS-approved tax software, and volunteers for assistance. It was offered alongside traditional Tax Help at the Douglass-Tuth, NewHolly, and Greenwood branches.

Community Listening: Outreach Hotspot Program and Digital Inclusion

Nadiyah Browne, Outreach Program Manager

Background

At the onset of the global pandemic, The Seattle Public Library Outreach Hotspot Team adapted our program model to meet the reality of the time. We began working in partnership with community based organizations and groups providing direct support and services geared towards building power, skills, connections, knowledge, wellbeing and ultimately increasing access to opportunities in communities disproportionately impacted by the digital divide. Hotspots were checked out to community partners for up to six months. Our staff built relationships through meetings and outreach that helped us learn about partners and participants, then shared relevant resources and opportunities at the library and beyond including low-cost internet, device and federal aid programs.

Purpose

In late 2023, the Outreach Hotspot Team invited our digital inclusion collaborators and thought partners to reflect and envision together. A primary goal of these conversations was to inform the next iteration of the Outreach Hotspot Program's design in a post state-of-emergency-response context. Leaders from community organizations, key stakeholders, and library staff convened to understand what made the 2020 shifts, including centering groups providing direct ongoing support, impactful. We also discussed challenges, learnings and future possibilities around digital equity work and partnerships, identifying interconnections between our common endeavors and broader digital equity goals. These learnings, along with information obtained in 2024 from current reports and stakeholders in broader digital inclusion efforts offer potential pathways for the library's ongoing commitment to this work. The resulting report is undergoing community review before being presented internally.

Methodology

The Outreach Hotspot Community Listening and Program Design Review project employed several methods to reflect on the program experience, impacts and opportunities. Input and insights were sought in the following ways:

- One in-person focus group with members of two non-hierarchical grassroots organizations
- Two virtual focus groups with members of 12 community based organizations that have participated in the Outreach Hotspot Program's current model between 2020-2023
- Meetings with external stakeholders who work in fields focused on digital inclusion
- Qualitative and quantitative data from reports including the [2024 City of Seattle Technology Access and Adoption Study](#)
- Recordings from webinars including [The Partners in Change Forum on Broadband and Digital Equity for Washington Native Indigenous Communities](#)

What We Are Learning

Leaders shared that people engaged through their work relied on this partnership and internet from the library hotspots to take action.

"It opens up access to so much." – Community Listening Participant

Participants were able to:

- Access library resources, job applications, childcare, school, news, voter registration, skill building classes, instant information, resources to meet basic needs, interpretation, and other resources to advance personal goals.
- Take part in virtual city government conversations and advocate for unhoused people in meetings that dealt with their future.
- Host accessible virtual and hybrid programming enabling people who are immunocompromised, disabled, have mobility issues, or in a period of transition to participate in online mentorship programs.
- Join leadership programs to build community and practice collective power rooted in justice, liberation and joy.
- Connect people to housing support, and help people reconnect with loved ones.
- Stay connected to support systems and care networks.

Our partners shared both positive and challenging elements of participating in the program. Ease of use, staff engagement, resource sharing and reliable internet were all important elements of success. When asked where there was room to address challenges, partners highlighted logistics elements like distribution and collection of materials and adverse effects that came in to play on the infrequent occasions when hotspots were lost. Participants also called for shifts in the duration of lending, increased transparency and accessibility to facilitate marginalized groups' participation and diversification of the kinds of resources sharing to account for the different kinds of engagement groups have with participants.

In addition to program design ideas, community leaders highlighted a broad array of barriers to digital inclusion that their program participants, groups and communities face. These are echoed by data from recent local research. Our community partners and others engaged in digital equity work in our region spoke to work in progress and opportunities to move forward with intention to make a broader and more sustainable impact.

Next Steps

The culminating report highlights learnings and recommendations for the next iteration of the program as well as opportunities to contribute to vital digital inclusion efforts. It's currently out for community review to ensure that the narrative is truly in alignment with the voices of participants. Once it has the stamp of approval from participants, the Library will be in a position to review program design recommendations and weigh them with current capacity to implement the next iteration of the Outreach Hotspot work. Insights from community partners, digital inclusion stakeholders and recent reports will equip the Library with a current perspective on efforts we can join to continue our work towards digital inclusion and an equitable library.

Communications Office: 2024 Q1 (Jan-Mar) Report

Learn more about us [on our infoNET site](#). Contact us at communicationsoffice@spl.org.

Activities and accomplishments in Q1 2024

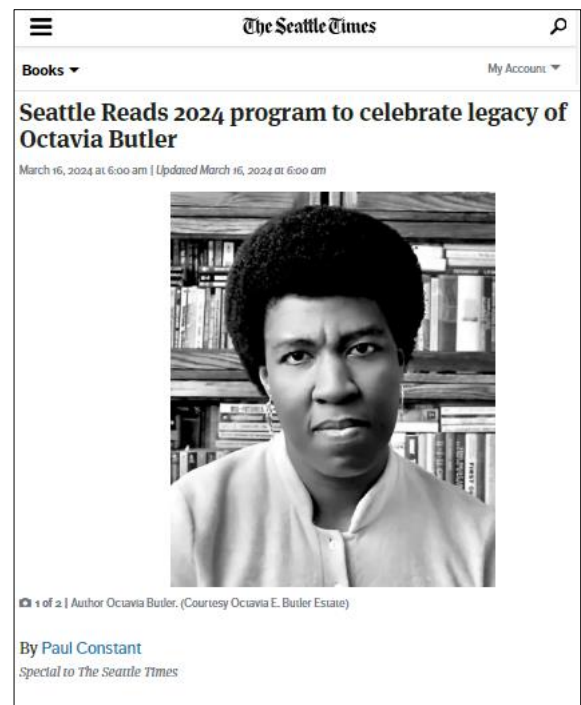
Media coverage

Earned media is publicity the Library receives as a result of media planning and outreach, usually facilitated through media pitches, press releases and building relationships with journalists – a core function of the Library’s Communications Office.

With the invaluable help of many Library colleagues, the Communications Office produced [13 press releases in Q1](#). There were at least **71 stories** published or broadcast about the Library in Q1, most of which resulted from earned media efforts.



[Real Change: Free after-school tutoring can help address persistent educational inequities](#)



[Seattle Times: Seattle Reads 2024 program to celebrate legacy of Octavia Butler](#)

View the Library’s complete list of media coverage on pages 7-11 of this report

Communications Office Support for Library Initiatives and Projects



A Global Reading Challenge team discusses their answer.

Promotional support for programs and services: Communications supported program and service managers in promoting the Library's [most popular books of 2023](#) (including [what teens read](#) in 2023, the Central Library [viewing party](#) of the UW College Football Championship game, a partner event with [Black-Owned Business Excellence](#), our annual free [Tax Help](#) program, the giveaway of [solar eclipse glasses](#), the [Path with Art](#) gallery exhibit at Central, the announcement of the [Seattle Reads 2024](#) selection, the [Global Reading Challenge](#) finals, and many author events, including Nisi Shawl's [guest curator series](#), Ijeoma Oluo's [event at Langston](#), and monthly roundups of author readings and community events happening across the system ([January](#), [February and March](#), and [April](#)).

Digital book holds – changes to limits: The Communications Office worked with Selection Services to announce the reduction of holds limits for digital books from 25 to 10 items. Communications drafted a [message for staff](#) with an FAQ, and a public [blog post](#) to share the details of this change, and to educate the public about the digital book pricing/licensing practices of publishers. Our public communication and media outreach resulted in media stories in Q2 that effectively outlined both the high cost of digital books for libraries (compared to physical books) and how we're trying to address this financial challenge in ways that has the least impact on patrons. The Communications Office also helped respond to patron correspondence about this change.

All Staff Day 2024: Communications supported a successful All Staff Day 2024 as part of the planning committee. We planned internal promotion and communication, as well as public notice of the systemwide closure; edited materials; coordinated and drafted talking points for the opening sessions; worked with a small team to organize the in-person and [virtual Staff Art Shows](#); and drafted a Staff Day survey. [Photos](#) and the virtual art show are available on infoNET, and we are in the process of drafting a report on the survey results to share with Library leadership and staff.

Books Unbanned: Supporting the Library's Books Unbanned program with internal and external communications support has been a big focus of our office since the program launched in April 2023. In Q1, in addition to responding to ongoing media inquiries about the program, we participated in a small project team working with Circulation Services' Bo Kinney, Brooklyn Public Library, and University of Washington graduate students to develop a solution for storing and analyzing youth stories we've received from Books Unbanned cardholders, as part of their Capstone project. By the end of Q1, we were in the process of editing a report compiled by the students and planning public communications around the report for early April that would share our analysis of hundreds of youth voices about their experience with censorship and lack of access, as well as the impact of Books Unbanned.

Strategic planning: The Communications Office continued supporting the developing of the Library's new 10-year strategic plan. The Head of Communications has served on the core team throughout the process and has contributed writing and editing to the plan itself. We look forward to helping support the rollout of the plan in Q2.



The Library team assess progress on the Green Lake Branch seismic retrofit project.

CIP construction projects: With help from the Library's CIP team, Communications continued to develop and distribute [internal](#) and [external](#) announcements and updates informing staff and patrons of the extended closures of Northeast and Southwest branches for HVAC installations. We fielded media inquiries and many patron questions and comments about unanticipated delays to the reopening of the Northeast Branch. We also [continued to update patrons](#) on the seismic retrofit and other substantial renovations currently underway at the Green Lake Branch and in the planning stages for the University Branch. We are now preparing for a public celebration for the reopening of the Green Lake Branch in late summer 2024.

State and federal funding: The Communications Office has played a key role in applying for federal funding opportunities to support major capital improvement projects for the Library, including upcoming seismic retrofits at University and Columbia and the installation of electric HVAC systems at our Carnegie branches. In Q1, the Library was awarded a Congressional earmark of over \$1.4 million for the seismic retrofit of University, which was sponsored by Rep. Jayapal. We are currently pursuing another Congressional earmark, sponsored by Rep. Smith, for over \$3 million for the retrofit of Columbia. Also in Q1, FEMA approved a Hazard Mitigation Program Grant award of over \$5 million for the installation of HVAC systems at the Columbia, Fremont, Queen Anne, University and West Seattle branches. This award is awaiting congressional approval, which is expected by the end of May.

Rules of Conduct Review Task Force: Communications continues serving on the Rules of Conduct Task Force core team, supporting efforts to make the Library's Rules of Conduct and Exclusion Guidelines more equitable. In Q1, we continued to participate in Task Force meetings, led by REAL co-facilitators Dr. LaMont Green and William Yi, and served as lead writers on the first draft of revisions to the Rules, which were informed by the [2023's substantive community engagement process](#), part of the project's Racial Equity Toolkit. In Q1, Communications was involved in presenting the draft of the new rules – currently called the Library's Community Use Agreement – to the Senior Management Team. The Task Force was in the process of reporting back to participants about how we are incorporating feedback.

Library App Project: Communications continued serving on the core team of the [Library App Project](#), which aims to develop a new app to make Library services more equitable and accessible. In Q1, we provided a [major staff update on the project](#), tested and evaluated demo apps submitted by vendors, assisted with selecting finalist vendors and recruiting a usability testing firm, and planned for staff and patron usability testing of finalist app demos, which will occur in late May and early June.

Microsoft 365 Implementation: Communications continued serving on the core project team responsible for the implementation of new MS 365 tools, including Teams, OneNote and SharePoint Online. With the help of IT staff, we kept Library staff informed of progress made on [the migration of infoNET to SharePoint Online](#), while working as part of small teams overseeing design, architecture, governance and retention protocols for the new infoNET. The Communications Office is one of a few Library teams participating in a pilot migration of our infoNET pages to SharePoint online.

Other internal communication efforts: The Communications Office also supported Library staff efforts by helping to share information internally about new, CIPA-compliant content filters on public computers, the [launch](#) and [use of the our new CRM system](#), the [upcoming rollout of multifactor authentication](#), and the [planned Citywide rollout of Workday](#), a new HR management system.



Communications Office initiatives

New monthly Seattle Times column: In Q1, the Communications Office helped develop a regular column by Reader Services librarian Misha Stone for the Seattle Times, which would offer timely book recommendations on a particular theme. Misha wrote two columns in Q1, on [football-themed romances](#) and [books that became Oscar adaptations](#), which were very well received by the Times, and which the Times allowed us to republish on our blog. Communications edits the column, republishes it on the blog (with the Times' permission) and coordinates the relationship with the Times.

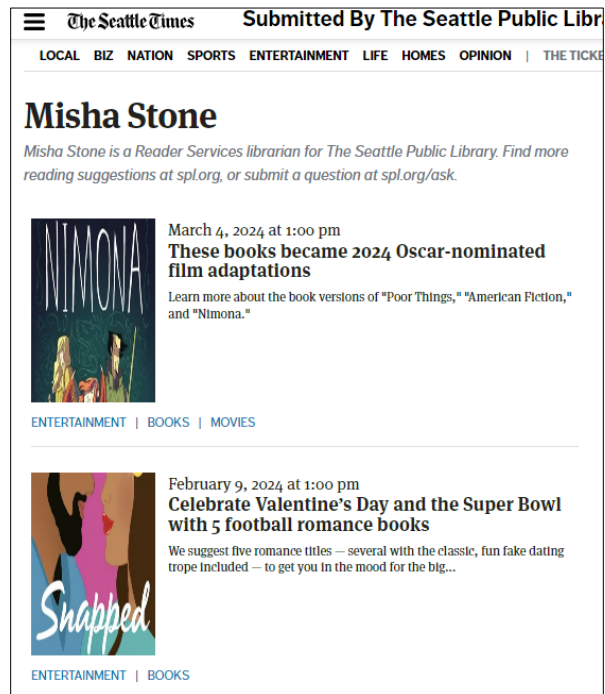
Reaching prioritized audiences: In Q1, we continued our focus on reaching Spanish-language / Latinx audiences and working with staff who support those audiences. Our main effort was to support the creation of a Spanish language video, in

partnership with Marketing and Online Services and South Park Branch staff. The video, which launched in April, features Spanish language radio host Mercedes Garcia showing what she loves about the Library. We continue to work on placing Library content in outlets that reach prioritized audiences, including developing an op-ed on the [impact of Homework Help](#) for Real Change News.

Library leadership open office hours: The Communications Office worked with the Library's Senior Management Team to develop a new monthly series of discussions between Library leaders and staff. The sessions were virtual in [January](#) and [February](#) and in-person at All Staff Day in [March](#). The team helps coordinate and facilitate the event each month.

Library news on Shelf Talk and LinkedIn: The Communications Office collaborates with the Shelf Talk Editorial Team to produce the Library's [Shelf Talk blog](#). We also collaborate with the Human Resources division to share news on our LinkedIn page. In Q1, the Communications Office produced [8 blog posts](#) and [11 LinkedIn posts](#).

Coffee Chat weekly staff newsletter: We produced [8 staff newsletters](#) in Q1 (including an ELES focused newsletter), which shared Staff Day news as well as interviews with Library directors and security officers. We also continued to share a one-page, biweekly, printable document of important staff news with each Coffee Chat for Library leaders to share with their teams.



Incident & security communications: Our goal in incident response is to accurately, effectively, and compassionately communicate during and after urgent, rapidly changing situations. Here are incidents we helped respond to in Q1, and security-related communications we produced with help from staff:

- [Saturday morning: Patron passed away outside Central 3/2](#)
- [Follow-up on Rainier Beach lockdown 1/23](#)
- [Overnight death of a Ballard Branch patron 1/13](#)
- [Jan. 8 Central Library fire alarm and evacuation 1/9](#)
- [Guardian security monitoring issues resolved 1/5](#)
- [Monitoring Failures for Security and Firm Alarm Systems 1/5](#)

Public disclosure

Communications fulfills public disclosure requests for the Library. In Q1, we spent over 83 hours working on 27 public disclosure requests. We also began work on a presentation to help Library staff better understand the disclosure process and to establish retention best practices across the system. We will pilot this presentation in Q2. In Q1, we also worked with Library HR and the City's HR and IT departments to include Library wage data to the City of Seattle's [open data portal](#), where other City departments report this data.

Establishing measurable reporting goals

Communication goals: Communications is developing measurable promotional goals starting with establishing baseline data in 2023 and continuing that effort in 2024. In 2025, we will use this data to set growth goals for Library promotion in the areas outlined below. 2024 goals include:

- incorporating strategic messaging in our promotional writing and media outreach about:
 - the Library's commitment to equity (13 in Q1)
 - fulfillment of Library Levy promises (4 in Q1)
 - Library impact on the community (3 in Q1)
 - the breadth of Library services (6 in Q1)
- getting strategic messages reflected in media stories
 - the Library's commitment to equity (11 in Q1)
 - fulfillment of Library Levy promises (2 in Q1)
 - Library impact on the community (7 in Q1)
 - the breadth of Library services (7 in Q1)
- reaching the Library's prioritized audiences (8 in Q1)
- sharing news regularly with Library stakeholders (10 in Q1)
- generating positive stories on behalf of the Library (52 in Q1)

Reporting: We edited the 2023 first quarter levy report and helped develop a presentation for the annual report to City Council about 2023 levy accomplishments, working with levy administrator Jan Oscherwitz. We continued to edit and guide development of monthly Library-at-a-Glance infographics for board reports. Levy reports are available [on the SPL.org website](#). We also created weekly reports for the Mayor's office on Library activities, and biweekly highlights for interdepartmental (IDT) meetings.

Meet the Communications Office

The following Library staff members comprise the Communications Office. You can reach the team by emailing us at CommunicationsOffice@spl.org. We are also available and responsive on Teams.



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Karly Williams
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206-684-4177

Complete media coverage in Q1 2024

News clips

The following stories about or mentioning the Library were published or broadcast in Q1 2024:

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|---|
| 29-Mar-2024 | Seattle Times | <u>Want to talk about writing? This long-running Seattle group has you covered</u> |
| 27-Mar-2024 | KING 5 | <u>It's making it harder for people to read': Washington librarians say rising cost of e-books is unsustainable</u> |
| 27-Mar-2024 | Axios | <u>This week in history: Library amnesty</u> |
| 27-Mar-24 | West Seattle Blog | <u>HPAC hangout, library closure, beverage benefit, more for your West Seattle Wednesday</u> |
| 27-Mar-24 | Curiosity - Seattle | <u>Seattle Public Library is giving out free glasses for the partial solar eclipse</u> |
| 27-Mar-24 | Real Change | <u>Free after-school tutoring can help address persistent educational inequities</u> |
| 27-Mar-24 | Axios | <u>This week in history: Library amnesty</u> |
| 26-Mar-24 | Seattle Magazine | <u>Seattle Launches Public Poetry Campaign</u> |
| 20-Mar-24 | West Seattle Blog | <u>FYI: Seattle Public Library branches' upcoming one-day closure</u> |



20-Mar-24	The Stranger	<u>Stranger Suggests: Anida Yoeu Ali's The Buddhist Bug, Make Believe Film Festival, CMAT, Sanctuary City, the Cherry Blossom Festival -- One Really Great Thing to Do Every Day of the Week</u>
19-Mar-24	The Stranger	<u>Seattle Public Library reduces maximum digital holds limit</u>
18-Mar-24	Travel & Leisure Asia	<u>Library Of Congress And Beyond: Step Into The Best In The World</u>
17-Mar-24	KOMO-TV	<u>Seattle's central library named one of the best in the world</u>
16-Mar-24	The Seattle Times	<u>Seattle Reads 2024 program to celebrate legacy of Octavia Butler</u>
14-Mar-24	KOMO-TV	<u>Seattle leaders to discuss safety issues at public forum Thursday</u>
13-Mar-24	Capitol Hill Blog	<u>Mayor to launch series of public safety forums to focus on Seattle's 'top issue'</u>
13-Mar-24	Hoodline	<u>Mayor Harrell hosts public safety forum at Seattle Central Library to discuss city's urban safety</u>
13-Mar-24	South Seattle Emerald	<u>Councilmember Tammy Morales Hosts In-District Office Hours in Rainier Beach</u>
12-Mar-24	Artbeat – City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture	<u>Seattle Civic Poet Launches Public Poetry Campaign</u>
12-Mar-24	Queen Anne & Magnolia News	<u>Plein Aires exhibit open through mid-April</u>
11-Mar-24	KUOW	<u>Libraries in Western Washington confront the challenges of being open to all</u>
11-Mar-24	The Seattle Times	<u>Rant and Rave: Reader appreciates local library's decorations</u>
10-Mar-24	TruthOut	<u>E-Books Can Subvert Book Bans, But Corporate Profit-Seeking Stands in the Way</u>
8-Mar-24	CNN	<u>Rem Koolhaas: 'In all my buildings, I'm trying to escape'</u>
8-Mar-24	NextAvenue	<u>For the Love of Libraries</u>



8-Mar-24	Curiosity - Seattle	<u>There are two big book sales happening in Seattle this month & items are \$4 or less</u>
7-Mar-24	Chongqing International Media Center	<u>Chongqing and Seattle Celebrate 40 Years of Enduring Friendship and Collaboration Sister Cities</u>
6-Mar-24	Northwest Asian Weekly	<u>Local author Susan Lieu to discuss new memoir at Seattle Public Library event</u>
4-Mar-2024	Seattle Times	<u>These books became 2024 Oscar-nominated film adaptations</u>
4-Mar-2024	South Seattle Emerald	<u>In 'Heartbreak City,' Shaun Scott Uses Seattle Sports as a Window Into Our City's Politics and Culture</u>
1-Mar-2024	Seattle Times	<u>Artist tells her family's complex story in comic book-style memoir</u>
28-Feb-2024	Daily Journal of Commerce	<u>Designing library spaces for the children of today</u>
28-Feb-2024	Seattle Medium	<u>Jenefeness Franke Honored With Economic Development Advocate of the Year Award</u>
28-Feb-2024	Real Change	<u>Real Change's vendor survey shows our impact on the community</u>
28-Feb-2024	Daily Journal of Commerce	<u>Architecture talk with Joshua Ramus</u>
28-Feb-2024	WBKO (Ohio)	<u>Ohio County Public Library receives grant to address teen mental health</u>
23-Feb-2024	Fox News	<u>7 of the most beautiful libraries to explore in the US</u>
20-Feb-2024	Secret Seattle	<u>How To Meet People In Seattle, According To Locals</u>
19-Feb-2024	The Federalist	<u>Our Library Stopped Late Fees, So I Stopped Returning Books</u>
16-Feb-2024	AL.com (Alabama)	<u>Black girl magic not 'Black girl tragic': How Tracie Hall saved America's libraries - and herself</u>
16-Feb-2024	KIRO News Radio / MyNorthwest	<u>What has Seattle elementary students embracing such weighty fiction?</u>
15-Feb-24	West Seattle Blog	<u>WEEKEND PREVIEW: Story Time Sunday with Kraken mascot Buoy at West Seattle Library</u>

15-Feb-2024	The UW Daily	Citing staffing and budgeting issues, Odegaard has no plans of returning to a 24-hour schedule
12-Feb-2024	The Seattle Times	Rant and Rave: Check found in library book
9-Feb-2024	The Seattle Times	Celebrate Valentine's Day and the Super Bowl with 5 football romance books
8-Feb-2024	The UW Daily	The Daily Editors' Book Club January: Toshikazu Kawaguchi's 'Before the Coffee Gets Cold'
8-Feb-2024	Seattle Met	The Case for Reading as a Self-Care Activity
1-Feb-2024	KGFW-AM	Lexington Public Library launches One Book, One Community program
31-Jan-2024	Curiosity	There are two big book sales happening in Seattle this February & items are \$4 or less
29-Jan-2024	West Seattle Blog	Full room and many topics at Gina Topp's first community-conversation meeting as Seattle Public Schools Board director
26-Jan-2024	The Guardian	Books and looks: gen Z is 'rediscovering' the public library
23-01-2024	New Day NW - King 5	Game On - Name That Book
23-Jan-2024	New Day NW - King 5	Reading Recommendations from Seattle Public Library
20-Jan-2024	The Facts	Free Tax Help offered at 11 Seattle Public Library locations
19-Jan-2024	Seattle Times	King County Library ranks third in the world for digital checkouts
19-Jan-2024	Curiosity	14 of the best free & cheap things to do in Seattle this February
18-Jan-2024	Queen Anne & Magnolia News	Free tax help available at Seattle Public Library locations
18-Jan-2024	MyNorthwest	Official: 5 homeless people died in Seattle during extreme cold snap
18-Jan-2024	Seattle Times	At least 5 people died from hypothermia during Seattle cold snap

17-Jan-2024	KUOW	<u>At least 5 people in Seattle died from hypothermia during the extreme cold</u>
16-Jan-2024	Street Insider	<u>Sistah Scifi Announces Nisi Shawl's West Coast Book Tour for 'Kinning', A Bold Sequel in the Realm of Afrofuturism</u>
15-Jan-2024	MyBallard	<u>Free tax help at Ballard Library starting in February</u>
15-Jan-2024	Seattle Times	<u>What's open and closed on MLK Day 2024 in the Seattle area</u>
11-Jan-2024	Publisher's Weekly	<u>OverDrive: Record Number of Libraries Hit One Million Digital Lends in 2023</u>
9-Jan-2024	Secret Seattle	<u>The Top 50 Free Things To Do In Seattle</u>
8-Jan-2024	JackFM	<u>Where To Watch And Hear The College Football Championships In Seattle</u>
8-Jan-2024	Seattle Medium	<u>The Central Library To Host CFP National Championship Watch Party On Jan. 8</u>
5-Jan-2024	Seattle Times	<u>Where to watch the national championship game around Seattle</u>
5-Jan-2024	Curiosity	<u>10 awesome free or cheap date ideas in Seattle this winter</u>
5-Jan-2024	KING5	<u>Go Dawgs! Cheer on UW in College Football Playoff National Championship at these local watch parties</u>
2-Jan-2024	Smithsonian Magazine	<u>Public Libraries Reveal the Most Borrowed Books From 2023</u>

News you can use: How to work with Communications

- Getting started:** If you'd like to work with Communications, a good first step is to [fill out this simple form](#), which helps us understand your needs.
- Tip of the month – working with media:** We wanted to remind staff that the Communications Office is responsible for the Library's outreach to the media, and if you get contacted by a reporter or other member of the media, you should always contact the Communications Office and/or direct them to us first (easiest way is to email us at Communications@spl.org). We are happy to involve staff in media efforts and provide training but want to make sure that you're fully supported and that we're following our media protocols. Here is a [simple set of FAQs](#) so you get a sense of how we work with media.
- Wondering about how MOS and Communications work together?** Check out the chart at right, which we included in this [Explainer](#) on this topic in Library Coffee Chat.
- Need "boilerplate" Library info?** Do you need a short description of the Library and its mission? We have a ["general Library content"](#) section of our infoNET site, where you can find blurbs about the Library, our mission, a bio of Chief Librarian Tom Fay and more.
- Tell your story to the media:** Are you launching a new program, partnership or event? Reach out to us for help writing press releases, talking points, media pitches and more. Start by filling out [this simple form](#).
- Tell your story to staff:** The Coffee Chat newsletter is designed to inform and connect Library staff. Learn more on the [Coffee Chat page](#) and send your submissions to newsletter@spl.org.
- Reach out any time:** You can reach the head of the Communications Office, Laura Gentry, at laura.gentry@spl.org. Or you can reach the entire team at communications@spl.org.





The Seattle Public Library

Date: May 30, 2024

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Jan Oscherwitz, Library Levy Administrator

Re: **First Quarter 2024 Levy Report**

Background

We are in the fifth year of our seven-year \$219.1 million 2019 Library Levy. This report, which covers activities and spending for the first quarter of 2024, continues the series of ongoing updates for the Library's leadership team and board of trustees to document implementation of the levy priorities and accomplishments. This report describes the way the Library has responded to changes in how our patrons use the Library and how we are using levy resources to support the levy investment areas of Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Children's Programming and Maintenance.

2024 Q1 Highlights

The 2019 Library Levy provides 39% of the Library's revised total 2024 budget of \$124.5 million. The Library spent \$7.7 million of the revised 2023 levy budget of \$48.8 million, or 16% of the revised levy budget. Much of the lag in spending budget authority is associated with the capital program, which continues to experience delays due to supply chain issues, among other challenges. This report also provides information on the remaining \$0.4 million of budget authority from the 2012 Library Levy.

In its 2019 levy proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how levy proceeds would be used to maintain and enhance Library services in the areas of Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Children's Programming and Maintenance. In Q1 2024, the Library continued to experience staffing and operational challenges that were unforeseeable when the levy was proposed in 2019. While these challenges disrupted some of our day-to-day operations, we made progress on delivering key levy promises.

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

Through Q1, the Library was able to maintain the expanded hours and service levels established in the spring of 2023: We were open about 18,000 hours systemwide in Q1, compared to fewer than 16,000 in Q1 2023. The impacts of a hiring freeze announced in late January and operational challenges in our branches began to result in unplanned closures toward the end of Q1 and the need to reduce open hours in Q2 to stabilize operations.

In Q1, we offered many signature Library events and programs, including readings with notable local writers such as chef J. Kenji López-Alt and bestselling author Ijeoma Oluo; the 29th annual Global Reading Challenge, culminating in the citywide finals at the Central Library on March 26, and Tax Help in the Central Library and several branches. Our Social Services Team, formed in 2022 continues to serve our patrons with the highest needs. The team provided over 300

referrals and support to patrons for housing, food, clothing, mental health, employment and other needs. The team also offered our first Social Service Resource Fair at the Central Library in March.

Collections: We promised a robust collection of books and materials

We continued to make significant investments in both digital and physical materials. Due to increasing demand for digital books, and the high cost of digital books for libraries, in mid-March, we reduced the maximum number of holds patrons could place on e-books and e-audiobooks at one time from 25 to 10 and reduced the number of copies we buy based on the number of holds placed. These changes will allow us to better manage costs and continue providing a broad and diverse selection of digital books to meet patron demand all year.

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

Our levy-funded hot spot program continues to provide internet access through our general collection and through targeted outreach with key community organizations. In Q1 2024, the 850 hot spots in our general collection were checked out over 1,800 times, and we worked with community partners to make 94 new long-term loans of the 250 hot spots in our outreach collection to provide more stable internet access to communities disproportionately impacted by the digital divide.

Our printing services at all our locations are more popular than ever, with nearly 500,000 pages printed in Q1 2024, 16% more than Q1 2023. We also made good progress on vendor selection for our mobile application and have selected two vendors to participate in usability testing with Library staff, potential users and community stakeholders.

Children's Programming: We promised to add more programming for children ages 0-5.

In Q1, we hosted 78 in-person weekly Play and Learn programs at seven different branches, with attendance exceeding 1,800. Most Play and Learn programs were bilingual, offered in English and Amharic, Chinese, or Somali. We also offered 245 story times at 18 branches, the Central Library and in the community. Library locations also hosted 245 in-person story times, including story times in Spanish and Arabic and a perennial patron favorite, Fire Fighter Story Time.

Maintenance: We promised to maintain buildings for the next generation

Our facilities and custodial staff completed more than 1,500 work orders in Q1, including daily pressure washing of the 5th Avenue plaza at the Central Library and the plaza at Ballard Branch. Completion of the seismic retrofit project at the Green Lake branch has been slowed by the delayed delivery of a new elevator and the project is now expected to be completed this summer. The University Branch is scheduled to close for construction for its seismic retrofit project in late 2024.

Action required/requested: Board review and consideration of the 2024 Q1 Levy Report for approval at the May Library Board meeting.

2024 Q1

The Seattle Public Library LEVY REPORT



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.

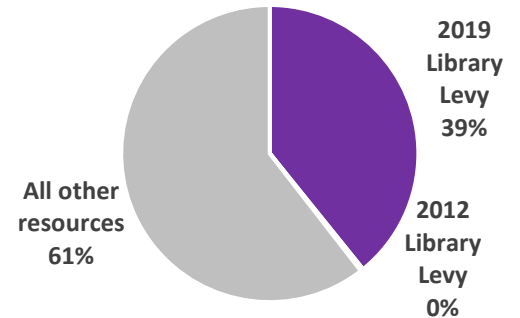
In 2024, the 2019 Levy accounts for \$48.8 million (39%) of the Library's total revised budget of \$124.5 million. The 2012 Levy provides \$363,000. Other sources including the City's general fund, state and federal grants, private funds and Library fund balance account for the remainder. As part of 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 Q1 2024, 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.

Q1 2024 highlights: Delivering on hours amidst uncertainty

After ending a year in which the Library's 27 locations were open more hours than at any time since 2009, the Library started 2024 on track to exceed our 2023 open hours. We were open nearly 18,000 hours, 7% more than in 2019, and recorded over 786,000 in-person visits. Construction projects at the Capitol Hill, NewHolly, Northeast and Southwest branches, which had caused temporary closures in Q4, were wrapping up and good progress was being made on the Green Lake seismic renovation project.

2024 Library Revised Budget
(\$124.5M)



Although the Library was open more hours in Q1 2024 than in pre-pandemic years, the Library's staffing capacity was stretched thin due other factors, such as increased staffing minimums that were necessary to implement in a more complicated post-pandemic public service environment. The Library also saw increased use of staff leave as Library employees took more unpaid leave and family medical leave to care for themselves and their families. These factors led to occasional unplanned closures, which created an unpredictable and frustrating patron experience, as well as shifting schedules and location redeployments for Library staff.

In late January, a hiring freeze was implemented at the Library, in tandem with Mayor Harrell's citywide hiring freeze, to help mitigate increased costs in 2024 and reduce the potential need for 2025 reductions. The City's General Fund faced a significant deficit, and 60% of the Library's budget comes from that funding source.

To bring more stability to open hours and to staff schedules, the Library reduced hours at most locations while Library leaders worked with the Mayor and the City Budget Office to better understand the impacts of the 2025 budget outlook. In addition, Chief Librarian Tom Fay worked with Mayor Harrell to identify exceptions to the Library's hiring freeze that would help create more staffing stability. The Library expects to know more about its 2025 General Fund allocation in the fall when Mayor Harrell announces the City's 2025-2026 budget.

Inflation continues to be another financial challenge for the Library as it has eroded the levy's buying power in its final years. As noted later in this report, exponential increases in construction costs have been one of the primary factors affecting the Library's ability to fulfill seismic projects as scheduled. The Library is seeking funding from additional sources to help leverage Levy dollars and complete these projects.

The new, four-year Library Union contract, which was signed in March 2024, addressed a number of long-standing staff concerns around compensation and scheduling, and included cost-of-living increases for 2023 (5%) and 2024 (4.5%). Because inflation outpaced our 2019 Levy assumptions, these increases, which are meant to help Library employee wages keep pace with inflation, also exceeded our 2019 assumptions. Despite these financial challenges, as you'll read in this report, the Library has continued to adapt 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.

Planning for the future of the Library

In Q1 2024, the Library made progress on finalizing the 10-year strategic plan that we had spent 2023 developing. Working with consultants, the Library engaged many internal and external stakeholders to help guide efforts to outline a 10-year future vision that positions the Library as a community hub and community connector. At the end of 2023, the Library made a [Draft Strategic Framework](#) available to the public.

In late March 2024, the Library's Strategic Planning Core Team presented the strategic plan to the Library's Board of Trustees. As we work towards a final draft of the strategic plan and implementation plan, we anticipate that the Board of Trustees will formally review and vote on the plan later in 2024.

In Q1 2024, the Library also began identifying a planning team that is working on a public engagement plan to guide the development of a 2026 Library Levy proposal. This team is also identifying key aspects of the new 2024-2033 Strategic Plan to incorporate into levy planning and engagement.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS & ACCESS

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 2024 for the Hours and Access category is \$13.8 million.

In January 2020, the Library started opening our branches one hour earlier on Sundays, the first step in what was intended to be more than 10,000 new Library hours annually system-wide funded by the levy. Then the pandemic began. After several years of COVID closures, restrictions and related staffing challenges, in April 2023, the Library was able to add 90+ hours more open hours per week than in 2019, resulting in our libraries being open more hours than in any year since 2009. Through Q1 2024, we maintained this higher level of service, including the reopening of the Northeast branch on March 4 after substantial completion of the HVAC/electrification project.

The new schedule included the following changes:

- More hours on Saturdays at 13 branches
- More hours on Sundays at all branches and the Central Library
- Earlier weekday openings at 13 branches
- Monday closures instead of Friday closures at six-day branches
- Earlier closures (6 p.m.) on Mondays at the Central Library and branches open on Mondays

- Changes in the mix of branches open for extended schedules to prioritize branches identified as Levy priorities.

In Q1, we were open nearly 18,000 hours, 7% more than our 2019 baseline. The additional open hours increased community access to Library collections, information services, computers, printers, programming and public spaces. During the first quarter, the Library recorded over 786,000 in-person visits.

Operating Challenges Continue

The Library has been working to rebuild staffing capacity, both in number and position type, since the pandemic. Although the Library was able to hire over 160 new staff to meet and exceed pre-pandemic open hours in 2023, we also increased the minimum number of staff required at many locations to provide full library services and safely operate facilities. Another factor related to reduced staff capacity is an increased use of personal or family medical leave and unpaid leave since the pandemic.

A third factor affecting staffing is the high number of vacant positions. The Library, a non-executive City department with authority to authorize its own hiring policies, implemented a hiring freeze in January, in tandem with Mayor Harrell's hiring freeze mandated for executive departments, to address budget challenges anticipated by the City. By March, the Library began to experience service impacts due to the staffing shortfalls with several branches closing on short notice when there were not enough staff on a given day to safely open and operate a branch.

The Library continues to work to identify staffing solutions and is working closely with the Mayor's Office through the budget process to better understand impacts to the Library's General Fund allocation in the 2025-2026 budget.

Reducing barriers to Library services

Beyond expanding Library hours, the levy supports improving access to Library services for everyone, especially those who face barriers to using Library resources.

Starting in January 2020, we eliminated overdue fines, which reduced the number of suspended accounts by half. Since then, the materials return rate has stayed the same and we have even seen a slight decrease in the number of items that are never returned. In addition to eliminating late fees, we continue to refine our borrowing policies to improve equitable access. We are participating in a working group with other public libraries in a nationwide effort led by Brooklyn Public Library to develop a policy framework of guiding principles and best practices for cardholder registration that support access and intellectual freedom. The policy framework will be made available in the fall of 2024.

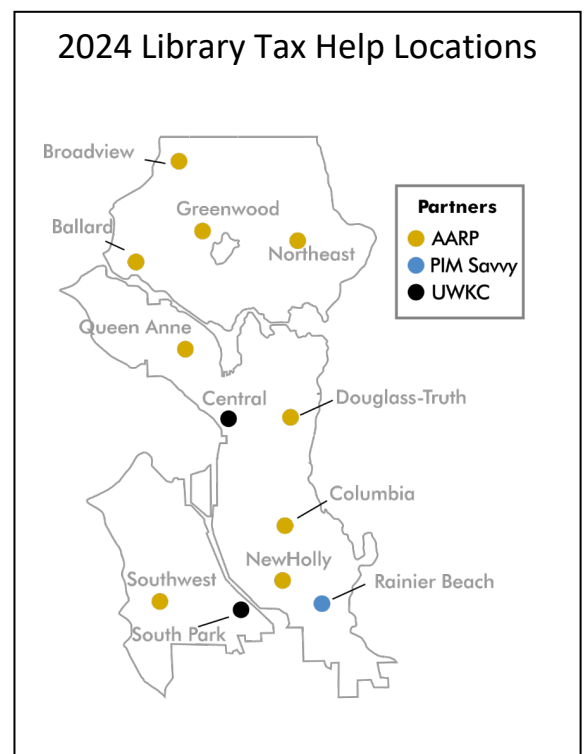
Another area where we are trying to increase access and reduce barriers is language access. Our marketing staff have been developing multilingual resources for programs such as Adult Tutoring/Basic Skills, English Conversation Circles and a new program, English for Work. In addition, we have translated email notifications for SPL Pickup Lockers, which are now available in Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. Our Communications staff works closely with marketing to promote relevant programs and services to communities whose first language is not English, including English conversation classes bilingual story times, cultural programs, World Language Collections, Homework Help and tutor.com, These initiatives not only improve communication with patrons, but also build a sense of belonging and participation, regardless of a patron's primary language.

In-person and virtual programs and services

The Library continues to make strides in bringing back in-person programming. Through Q1, we offered our popular in-person Homework Help program at nine branches. Students get homework support, play academic games, read and work on academic skills with trained volunteers. Free snacks are always provided. In Q1, we offered 215 Homework Help sessions, with attendance exceeding 1,900.

We once again offered in-person Tax Help sessions in partnership with United Way of King County (UWKC), AARP and PIM Savvy at the Central Library and 11 other branch locations. AARP introduced a new program this year called Facilitated Self Assistance alongside their regular tax assistance at Douglass-Truth, Greenwood, and NewHolly branches. Trained volunteers were onsite to assist patrons with filing their taxes and to answer any questions. Together, our partners provided over 250 Tax Help sessions and filed over 4,600 returns at Library locations between late January and mid-April. Post season tax help is available through June.

We continued to offer in-person story time, one of our most beloved children's programs and with many early learning benefits. In Q1, the Library led more than 240 story times in 19 locations both in our libraries and out in the community, with attendance of over 8,000. We also held 76 levy-funded Play and Learn sessions, with total attendance of over 1,800. This levy-funded program is described in more detail in the Children's Programming section of this report.



The Central Library hosted 44 public events during Q1, including a free watch party in January for the College Football National Championship, featuring the Washington Huskies battling the Michigan Wolverines, and a presentation by acclaimed local chef and author J. Kenji Lopez-Alt, author of “The Wok,” winner of the 2023 Washington State Book Award in General Nonfiction. For the first time in-person since 2020, audiences packed the auditorium for the award-winning photojournalists and staff from The Seattle Times for “Pictures of the Year 2023.” In February, the auditorium was closed for renovations to audio/visual hardware and software. March saw the 29th Global Reading Challenge semi-final and final competition rounds. Global Reading Challenge is a reading incentive program for 4th and 5th graders enrolled in Seattle Public Schools funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation. Students form teams and read selected books, then take part in a trivia competition. Over 459 teams and over 3,400 students participated in the program this year.



Global Reading Challenge Final, Central Library Auditorium. March 2024

In Q1, the Library also announced and began promoting its [Seattle Reads selection](#) for 2024, “Parable of the Sower” by Octavia Butler, which is the first science fiction novel for the program and the first time an author who has passed has been selected. In addition to doing media outreach that resulted in a Seattle Times story, we created a discussion guide and a webpage that links to various programs taking place at multiple library branches and locations throughout the city and promoted widely through social media and paid advertising on local media channels.

Because Octavia Butler was a writer with deep local roots and global influence, Seattle Reads is collaborating with community partners across the city on programs related to “Parable,” including dozens of book discussions, panels and performances help from April to June.

In-house Social Services team

In Q1 2024, our in-house Social Services Team continued to create safe and welcoming community spaces and events, provide referrals to lifeline services and make a difference in our patrons’ lives. Comprising a social services librarian, a senior community resource specialist and a levy-funded community resource specialist focused on 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. The team meets regularly with Library staff throughout the system to share information and engage in problem solving.

“Thank you so much for walking me to that shelter. You saved my life. That night we met was my first day in the country. You are giving me a beam of hope.”

- Patron receiving support from Social Services Team

During Q1, the Social Services Team recorded 323 referral-based interactions with patrons, as well as 53 non-referral interactions and 13 consultations with branch and other Library staff. They also continued to host a weekly Coffee & Conversation program at the Central Library, serving 490 participants. These informal gatherings, which bring patrons in need of social services together with Library staff, make patrons feel welcome at the Library and often result in community resource referrals. A similar program led by branch staff occurs weekly at the Ballard Branch.

In March, the Social Services Team also held its first Resource Fair at the Central Library, attended by 19 partner organizations and over 100 patrons. The fair hosted free haircuts, a foot care clinic, rapid Hepatitis and HIV testing, a communal art project, and resources on transportation, voter enrollment, services for older adults, pets, harm reduction and overdose prevention, snacks, and more. The team's favorite feedback came from a patron who asked, "When is the next one?"



Social Services Resource Fair, Central Library

The Children and Teen Services team and the Social Services Team continued to co-host weekly Young Adult Drop-ins on Fridays at the Central Library. This program, for those aged 12-26, offers young adults the chance to connect with Library staff over crafts, conversation and a warm meal provided by partner Teen Feed. Importantly, drop-ins are a space for young adults to connect with each other and create peer networks of support and understanding. One young adult said, "Drop-ins is a really important space for me. I can come here and not be judged." In Q1, the program served over 100 teens and young adults.

The team also began offering monthly virtual drop-in hours for staff, to increase communication and collaboration with staff across the system and assist colleagues in meeting the challenges they face.

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 2024, the 2019 Levy provided \$5.9 million in the Collections category, including \$4.5 million for books and materials.

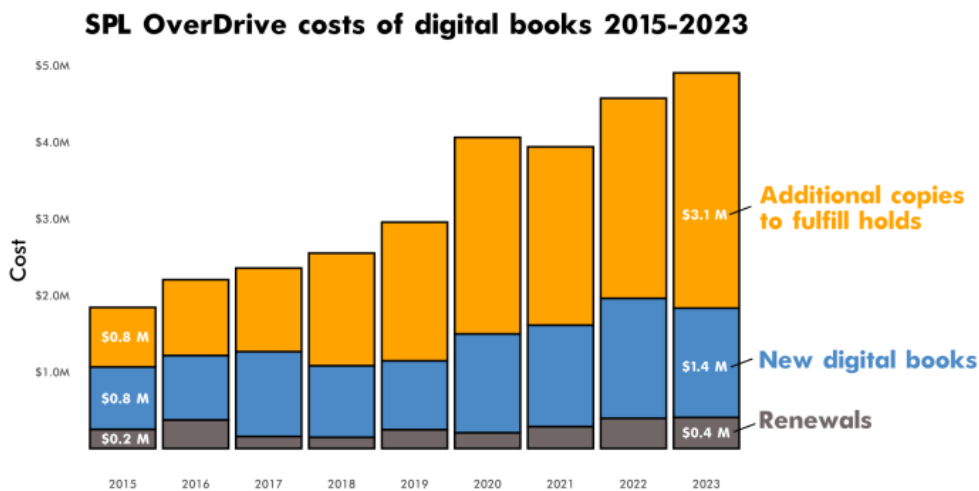
Digital collections reaching more people

An increasing number of Library users continue to access our electronic resources. Over 133,000 patrons downloaded more than 1.5 million digital books (e-books and e-audiobooks) through OverDrive in Q1 2024. This represents a 16% increase in users and 18% increase in checkouts compared to Q1 2023. Use of our streaming services also grew rapidly in Q1. We saw a 13% increase in the number of patrons using Kanopy, our most popular video streaming service (nearly 9,500 in Q1), and a 12% increase in the number of patrons using hoopla, a service that provides streaming music, movies, TV and comics (just over 7,200 for Q1). Due to budget pressures and a low user base compared to other services, we discounted our subscription to Freegal, a music downloading and streaming service, at the end of 2023.

The impact of increased demand for digital materials

Increased demand for e-books and e-audiobooks has put significant pressure on the Library budget. Annual checkouts of digital books have almost tripled from 2015 to 2023, as have our costs. The Library has done its best to meet patron demand, but meeting the demand has become unsustainable because of the high cost of digital books for libraries.

Holds are the largest single factor in increasing costs for digital books. To maintain reasonable wait times, the Library buys additional copies of a title when it accrues more patron holds. In 2023, 62% of the Library's spending on digital books was because of holds placed on high-demand titles.



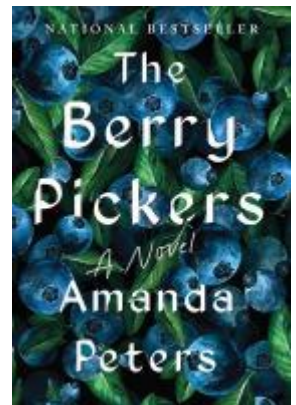
To address these challenges, after reviewing a number of strategies for managing increasing digital book costs, in mid-March the Library announced that it would reduce the maximum number of holds patrons can place for e-books and e-audiobooks in OverDrive from 25 to 10 at one time. While this was a difficult decision to make, it was necessary to manage spiraling costs for digital books and stay within the budget allotted for digital materials. The Library has also increased wait times for high-demand materials by changing the copy to holds ratio from 1:5 to 1:7 (in other words, there must be an average of seven holds per copy on a title before the Library will purchase additional digital licenses). With these adjustments, we reduced our purchases of digital copies in Q1 by 16% compared to Q1 2023, resulting in overall spending of \$1.18 million in Q1 2024 compared to \$1.24 million in Q1 2023.

Managing the costs of high-demand digital materials is essential to expanding the breadth and depth of our digital collections. We purchased 12,682 titles from OverDrive in Q1, compared to 12,421 titles in Q1 2023.

Levy funds were also used to expand the Library's World Languages collection for both children and adults. In Q1, we purchased 206 titles for adults and 168 titles for children in 11 languages available in OverDrive (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese). Highlights include works by Seattle Reads author Octavia Butler in Spanish, German, Italian and Chinese and e-audiobook editions of children's titles like "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" in Spanish; "The Adventures of Pinocchio" in Italian; and "Fantastic Mr. Fox" in French.

Investments in physical materials

While e-books and e-audiobooks attract more Library users, many patrons still prefer physical books. In Q1, patrons checked out more than 1.47 million physical items (including renewals), down about 3% from Q1 2023. More than 71,000 people checked out physical Library materials in Q1 2024, compared to about 69,000 in Q1 2023, an increase of about 3%. The levy funds getting physical materials in the hands of patrons faster, including [Peak Picks](#), the Library's signature no-holds, no-wait collection of high interest titles, which has entered its seventh year. The Library added 32 Peak Picks titles and over 5,300 copies in the first quarter. Nonfiction highlights include "Rental Person Who Does Nothing by Shoji Morimoto," a Japanese bestseller; "Misunderstood Vegetables," by Seattle-based chef Becky Selengut; and "Madness: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum," by Antonia Hylton. Fiction highlights include "James," Percival Everett's retelling of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," and "The Wandering Stars," Tommy Orange's follow-up to "There, There."



Over 32,000 Peak Picks were checked out in Q1, 10% fewer than in the first quarter of 2023. The most popular Peak Picks title during this period was the stunning debut novel, "The Berry

Pickers,” by Amanda Peters, which follows the lives of two siblings from an Indigenous Canadian family who pick berries seasonally in Maine in the 1960s.

More local history online and in the Seattle Room

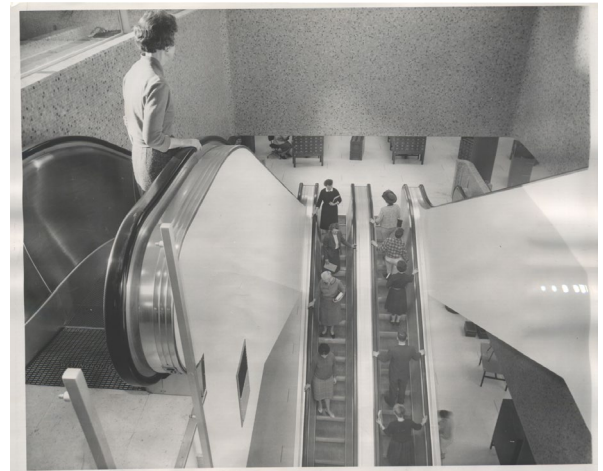
This quarter we had three significant additions to our digital collections. We added nearly 2,000 issues of [Northwest Asian Weekly](#), spanning from 1983 to 2023, to our digital archives with the help of Assunta Ng, the paper’s founder, editor and publisher. This collection is a rich resource for news related to the local Asian American community as well as national and international events. Originally named the Seattle Chinese Post, it started as a Chinese language paper in 1982. In 1983, the paper began to be published in English and in 1992, its name was changed to the Northwest Asian Weekly.



In Q1, we also scanned a sampling of slides from the [Paul Dorpat Collection](#). Paul Dorpat donated his research archive to the Library in 2019. The archive contains photographs in a variety of formats, ephemera and documents relating to his books on Washington State history and his popular “Now and Then” columns. We are planning to add material to this collection as processing continues.

In addition to these new collections, we added more materials to our [Black Culture and History collection](#) with the digitization of three more [books by local author Jacqueline E. A. Lawson](#). “A Story of Camp George Jordan,” “Genealogy of the William H. Gross (Sr.) and the Agnes Dixon-Lee Families” and “The James P. Ball Family, A Genealogy” can now be found alongside “Let’s Take a Walk! A Tour of Seattle’s Central Area as It Was Then,” which the Library had previously digitized.

The Seattle Collection acquired several other notable items in Q1, including the Russ Dille Seattle Sports History Collection; press photos of Richard Nixon at a presidential campaign rally in downtown Seattle in 1968; and photos of anti-war protestors taking over People’s Bank in downtown Seattle in 1970, hundreds of people marching down the newly named Martin Luther King Boulevard in 1984, and Library staff members riding the escalator in the new 1960 Seattle Central Library, which was the first library in the country in have an escalator.



Escalator at the Central Library, 1960

The Library also acquired a journal/notebook belonging to Honor Wilhelm, the owner and editor of The Coast magazine, an illustrated magazine related to Washington and the Pacific Northwest (1901-1911). The notebook provides

an inside view of magazine publishing in Seattle and the surrounding area during the early 20th century.

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 provides \$2.7 million in budget authority to support technology operating expenses in 2024 and \$6.2 million, including \$5.6 million in carryforward, for the technology capital program.

Digital equity and the Hot Spot 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 The Library's [HotSpot program](#).

Our hot spot program continues to provide internet access through our general collection and through targeted outreach with key community organizations. In Q1, the 850 hot spots in our general collection were checked out 1,800+ times. We also loaned 94 outreach hotspots on a long-term basis to groups serving people disproportionately impacted by the digital divide. Our ongoing partnerships with Villa Comunitaria, University Heights Vehicle Resident Program and API Chaya support long-term access to internet, information, resources and communities of support with people actively moving towards personal and collective goals.

As part of our Wi-Fi outreach program, Library staff connected with program participants through outreach at Tiny House Villages and community gathering spaces. A recent visit to digital literacy class led by Villa Comunitaria at its space in the South Park Senior Center provided an opportunity for



Library staff showcasing Library resources at Villa Comunitaria digital class in South Park

students and Spanish-speaking Library staff to chat about language and citizenship resources, Homework Help and adult tutoring. Several students signed up for Library cards, while others browsed the collection of uncatalogued books in Spanish. One person shared that they were interested in learning how to knit and was excited to find a book about knitting to take home!

SPL's Outreach Program Manager curated information, ideas and opportunities learned through community listening sessions in 2023 into a report that is currently out for community review. We look forward to ongoing iterations of this program informed by digital inclusion collaborators across the city and current data from sources engaged in building digital equity.

Expanding access to computers, scanners and more

In Q1, over 16,000 patrons used Library computers over 86,000 times. This is about 11% more sessions compared with Q4 2023. Our technology team continued to modernize and improve the Library's equipment. In Q1, we upgraded 47 public and staff computers that had reached the end of their useful lives.

The Library continues to be a central hub for community printing, with the number of pages printed increasing by 16% from 427,000 in Q4 2023 to 498,000 in Q1 2024. Our ScanEZ stations, which offer free faxing and scanning as well as translation, remain popular.

The Library is making good progress on the development of a mobile app that will increase access to the Library system, enhance the online patron experience and attract new audiences. Using priorities identified by focus groups during the design and development phase of the project, we issued a comprehensive RFP that specified features required for an intuitive and impactful user experience, with an emphasis on access for people and communities most impacted by the digital divide.

In Q1, we selected four vendors to provide demos. Two finalists will participate in usability testing where we will gather feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders including Library staff, current patrons, prospective users, and other community stakeholders. This feedback will inform the final vendor selection to ensure that the new SPL mobile app will be fully accessible and meet the needs of community.

“If I ever did need access to a printer, the Library would be my go-to.”

– Beacon Hill patron

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SUPPORTING CHILDREN

Expanding early learning options for children

Children’s programming brings people into the Library

The 2019 Levy provides about \$390,000 for Library early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5, in 2024. A key element is our continued support for drop-in neighborhood-based play groups for the Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregiver (FFN) community through the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program. 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 provides meeting room space, access to group supplies and financial support to local community-based groups who facilitate these groups. Additionally, our children’s librarians provide early literacy support, promote library programs and services and build connections with family, friend and neighbor caregivers. BrightSpark Early Learning Services, the umbrella organization that administers the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program, provides curriculum support and program evaluation.

We currently offer weekly Play and Learn programs at Beacon Hill, Columbia, Delridge Lake City, NewHolly, Rainier Beach and South Park branches. Most programs are bilingual and are offered in English and Spanish, Chinese, Amharic or Somali. It often takes several months for groups to get established and the Library provides support by listing the groups in our events calendar and working with our partners to reach prioritized audiences, especially those who are not familiar with library services. This outreach pays off. Our newest group at NewHolly Branch, which offers Play and Learn activities in English and Somali, has

been steadily gaining attendees since its launch last November. Roda Ahmed of East African Community Services, our community partner, reports, “We’re witnessing a steady increase in participants each day, with Fridays now drawing in an impressive 15 to 20 kids ...The families and children who attend the program are absolutely delighted, leaving with smiles each week.”

Overall, we offered 78 Play and Learn sessions at seven Library branches in Q1 with a total attendance exceeding 1,800.



Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, Delridge Branch

In Q1, we offered 245 story times at 18 branches, the Central Library and in the community. Our offerings included world language story times in Spanish and Arabic and a perennial patron favorite, Fire Fighter Story Time. Total attendance at these programs exceeded 8,000.

Beyond in-person offerings, we continued to offer a robust menu of virtual programs through our [Kids' YouTube channel](#), including 177 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. Overall, our children's videos were viewed over 7,000 times. Our most popular video, first published in 2020, continues to be "What Firefighters Wear." This 4-minute video garnered over 4,000 views in Q1.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: MAINTENANCE

Protecting our investments

The 2019 Levy promised to maintain Library buildings, preserve funding for major maintenance and add resources to undertake seismic retrofits for the [historic Columbia, Green Lake and University branches](#). The 2019 Levy provides about \$2 million in budget authority in 2024 to support routine maintenance and \$12.9 million to support major maintenance and seismic work.

Routine maintenance: Keeping our facilities clean and safe

Keeping the Library clean, safe and accessible is an important levy priority. The members of janitorial/custodial team and facilities team were busy this past quarter, completing approximately 1,500 work orders, despite being understaffed due to the limitations on hiring. The janitorial/custodial team completed 500 work orders. In addition to their daily job duties, they conducted deep cleanings of contaminated restrooms and continued to work on eradicating pest infestations at some locations. The team also began readying the Central Library for the 20th anniversary celebration in May.

The facilities team completed over 1,000 works orders in Q1, performing activities that ranged from maintaining the Automated Materials Handling System (AMHS) to performing walkthroughs and filter replacements for the HVAC systems to maintaining and repairing the fire and sprinkler system.

Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

The 2019 Levy provides \$5.2 million in 2024 budget authority and \$12 million in carryforward authority for major maintenance and seismic work (nearly \$10 million of the carryforward authority is allocated to

seismic retrofit work). The 2012 levy provided an additional \$250,000 in remaining carryforward authority. In the first quarter of 2024, the Library spent nearly \$2.1 million of 2019 levy funds on seismic and major maintenance work.

In Q1, the Library was completing final details on three HVAC/electrification projects begun in 2023, at the Northeast, Capitol Hill and Southwest branches, which will increase our ability to serve as a refuge from heat and wildfire smoke and reduce our carbon footprint. With the completion of these projects, 21 of our 27 locations will offer air-conditioned public spaces this summer. Several other HVAC/electrification projects (including Fremont, Queen Anne and West Seattle) are waiting until the Library receives a decision on its 2022 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazardous Mitigation Grant, which is expected later in 2024.

Construction for the Green Lake Branch seismic retrofit project is continuing through mid-2024; progress has been slowed by the delayed delivery of the new branch elevator. As of Q1, the University Branch seismic retrofit remained in the permitting phase and Landmark Board review; the branch is tentatively scheduled to close for construction later in 2024. As mentioned in previous reports, due to scope expansion, material scarcity and exponential increases in construction costs, the project may face a budget shortfall of \$5 to \$6 million.

The Library continues to pursue federal and state funding opportunities to supplement levy funding for both seismic and HVAC/electrification projects. However, applying for, monitoring and reporting on federal and state funding requires substantial staff resources, and often requires technical expertise, all of which can be beyond current Library staff capacity. Timeliness of funding decisions, especially at the federal level, varies and is dependent upon political factors beyond the Library's control.

As previously mentioned, if the Library fails to secure adequate federal and state grants (coupled with a citywide decline in Real Estate Excise Tax revenues), it is likely that there will be insufficient resources to undertake the third seismic project (the Columbia Branch) planned in the 2019 levy.

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead:

As you'll read in our 2024 second 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:

- 20th Anniversary of the Central Library
 - Spanish collection added to floating collections
 - Temporary closures due to staffing
-

2024 Financials

The 2019 Levy accounts for \$48.8 million (39%) of the Library's total revised 2024 budget of \$124.5 million. The Library spent \$7.7 million in funds from the 2019 Levy and \$106,000 in funds from the 2012 Levy in Q1.

Spending tables below show the 2024 Operations Plan Budget plus encumbrances and unspent budget authority from prior years in the revised budget columns. Carryover budget authority of \$17.7 million from the 2019 levy and nearly \$363,000 from the 2012 levy is available for spending in 2024.

2019 Levy	2024		YTD Expenditures	YTD Available	% Spent
	Operations Plan	2024 Revised Budget			
Hours & Access	13,692,000	13,818,277	2,938,344	10,879,933	21%
Providing Books & Materials	5,931,000	5,870,749	1,426,538	4,444,211	24%
Technology & Online Services	2,670,000	2,608,499	598,327	2,010,172	23%
Literacy & Early Learning	381,000	390,396	59,278	331,118	15%
Building & Facility Support	1,947,000	2,015,011	421,950	1,593,061	21%
Administration	573,000	578,566	112,007	466,560	19%
Major Maintenance and IT CIP	5,859,000	23,520,884	2,125,944	21,394,940	9%
Total	\$31,053,000	\$48,802,384	\$7,682,389	\$41,119,995	16%
Includes \$17.7 million in carryforward budget authority					

2012 Levy	2024		YTD Expenditures	YTD Available	% Spent
	Operations Plan	Revised Budget			
Technology & Online Services	-	98,932	98,932	(0)	100%
Building & Facility Support	-	9,250	-	9,250	0%
Major Maintenance and IT CIP	-	254,878	7,156	247,722	3%
Total	-	\$ 363,060	\$ 106,088	\$ 256,972	71%
Revised budget is all carryforward budget authority					

Table 1. Scheduled weekly hours in 2024 compared to 2019 baseline

Location	2019	Jan. - Mar. 2020	Jan. 1 - Mar. 4, 2024	Mar. 5 - Apr. 11, 2024
Ballard Branch	60	61	62	62
Beacon Hill Branch	60	61	56	56
Broadview Branch	60	61	62	62
Capitol Hill Branch	60	61	62	62
Central Library	62	62	62	62
Columbia Branch	60	61	56	56
Delridge Branch	39	40	56	56
Douglass-Truth Branch	60	61	62	62
Fremont Branch	39	40	48	48
Green Lake Branch	39	40	CLOSED	CLOSED
Greenwood Branch	60	61	62	62
High Point Branch	46	47	62	62
International District/Chinatown Branch	46	47	62	62
Lake City Branch	60	61	62	62
Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch	39	40	48	48
Magnolia Branch	39	40	48	48
Montlake Branch	39	40	48	48
NewHolly Branch	39	40	56	56
Northeast Branch	60	61	CLOSED	56
Northgate Branch	60	61	60	56
Queen Anne Branch	39	40	48	48
Rainier Beach Branch	60	61	56	56
South Park Branch	46	47	62	62
Southwest Branch	60	61	56	56
University Branch	46	47	48	48
Wallingford Branch	39	40	56	56
West Seattle Branch	60	61	56	56
Total Weekly Hours	1,377	1,403	1,416	1,468
Hours as a % of 2019 baseline			103%	107%



The Seattle Public Library

Date: May 30, 2024
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Jessica Lucas, President, AFSCME Local 2083
Re: **Passing the Torch**

Hello Library Board of Trustees. I regret not being there in person, but I am currently in the beautiful islands of Haida Gwaii; once known as the Queen Charlotte Isles, they were recently ceded back to the Haida Nation. I feel very fortunate to work for an organization that supports its staff in pursuing lives outside of the Library and refreshing our minds and spirits through the ability to take paid time away from work.

I want to take a moment to say thank you to Anne Cisney for all she has done as our Union President to bring us to this moment in time. I have been very fortunate to work with and learn from Anne through the years and because of that experience, I am much better prepared to step into the role of President. She will now be serving Local 2083 as Vice President for Librarians.

In my elected offices with the Union over the years, as Executive Vice President, Vice President for Librarians, and Treasurer, I have gained insight into the rich history and the current state of Union/Library relations. I am committed to continuing a healthy relationship with management in the coming year, working with the Union Leadership Team, and supporting and uplifting my Union Siblings in all of my efforts. Together we can build an organization where we are all safe and supported.

I look forward to making this position my own, and bringing my perspective and the voices of our members to the table. Thank you for the work you do and I look forward to seeing you virtually in June.

Action required/requested: Informational only.



The Seattle Public Library

NEWS RELEASES

Date	Title
2024-04-30	May 2024 Author and Community Events Feature Amy Tan, Zoe Schlanger, Satsuki Ina and more
2024-04-19	Seattle Reads Celebrates Octavia Butler's 'Parable of the Sower' with Panels, Performances and a Party
2024-04-18	'Stories From the Streets' Exhibit at the Central Library Spotlights Portraits of Real Change Vendors
2024-04-11	Books Unbanned Report Details the Impact of Censorship on Young People Across The United States



The Seattle Public Library
MEDIA COVERAGE

Date	Organization	Headline	Details	Link
25-Apr-2024	The Stranger	<u>Council Member Maritza Rivera Blames Union Wages and E-books for Library Closures</u>	Today the Seattle City Council Libraries, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee spoke about The Seattle Public Library's 1,500 hours of rolling closures for the first time since the Library announced the service cuts two weeks ago.	<u>https://www.thestranger.com/news/2024/04/25/79485474/council-member-maritza-rivera-blames-union-wages-and-e-books-for-library-closures</u>
23-Apr-2024	KUOW	<u>Digital reading soars in Seattle, creating problems for local libraries</u>	The Seattle region loves to read. The city is one of just two UNESCO cities of literature in the country. "We just have voracious readers in Seattle," said Elena Gutierrez, collection services manager at Seattle Public Library. In the past four years, reading in the city has also shifted away from print books and toward digital options, like e-books and e-audiobooks.	<u>https://www.kuow.org/stories/digital-reading-soars-in-seattle-creating-problems-for-local-libraries</u>

23-Apr-2024	Good EReader	<u>Seattle Library is decreasing the number of holds for ebooks</u>	The public library is one of the ways that savvy users can get free audiobooks and ebooks. They can be read on your smartphone, tablet or e-readers. Kobo e-readers are especially good since they have Overdrive integration in all their devices, making browsing, borrowing, and reading possible. One downfall of libraries' digital shelves is that users can be put on a waitlist for popular titles. The Seattle Public Library is doing something new that will likely be emulated by other library systems worldwide. Due to rising costs, they will limit the number of holds a user can make.	<u>https://goodereader.com/blog/e-book-news/libraries-are-decreasing-the-number-of-holds-for-ebooks</u>
22-Apr-2024	KING 5	<u>Evening Raves: 'Remarkably Bright Creatures,' shopgoodwill.com and Ketone supplements</u>	"Remarkably Bright Creatures" was the fifth most borrowed book at the Seattle Public Library last year and it comes out in paperback next month.	<u>https://www.king5.com/article/entertainment/television/programs/evening/evening-raves-remarkably-bright-creatures-shopgoodwillcom-ketone-supplements/281-7f1572ec-4f7b-44b6-81cd-15333d17e2c2</u>
22-Apr-2024	KOMO-TV	<u>Books Unbanned report story on KOMO</u>	Featuring Tom Fay on the Books Unbanned report	<u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8so6Ni41HM</u>

19-Apr-2024	West Seattle Blog	The list for your West Seattle Friday	Library Closure: The Seattle Public Library's just-announced closure days continue; the West Seattle (Admiral) branch will not be open, but it's regular hours today for our area's other libraries.	https://westseattleblog.com/2024/04/the-list-for-your-west-seattle-friday-6/
17-Apr-2024	School Library Journal	The Impact of Censorship on Teens	The Brooklyn and Seattle Public Libraries asked kids signing up for their Books Unbanned program why they wanted a library card. The answers ranged from practical to very personal.	https://www.slj.com/story/newsfeatures/Impact-Censorship-Teens-Censorship-News
16-Apr-2024	Hoodline	Seattle poet Cindy Luong celebrates libraries' impact with "Poetry in Place" at Seattle Public Libraries	Cindy Luong's journey with literature and community has found a new expression at The Seattle Public Libraries, where her poem "Poetry in Place: Cindy Luong" celebrates the intertwining of growth, memories, and the steadfast presence of libraries in one's life.	https://hoodline.com/2024/04/seattle-poet-cindy-luong-celebrates-libraries-impact-with-poetry-in-place-at-seattle-public-libraries/
16-Apr-2024	Reddit.com r/WestSeattle WA	The High Point Branch - Seattle Public Library has a Seed Library!	There are now free seed libraries within the High Point and Southwest branches.	https://www.reddit.com/r/WestSeattleWA/comments/1c5l26z/the_high_point_branch_seattle_public_library_has/?rdt=37496
15-Apr-2024	Seattle Times	Dig into these 4 books for Earth Day	The Seattle Public Library loves to promote books and reading. This column, submitted by the library, will be a space to promote reading and book trends from a librarian's perspective. You can find these titles at the library by visiting spl.org and searching the catalog.	https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/books/dig-into-these-4-books-for-earth-day/

15-Apr-2024	South Seattle Emerald	<u>The Seattle Public Library Faces Shortened Hours Through Early Summer</u>	Because of Seattle City budget shortfalls, certain branches of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) have scheduled shortened service hours through at least early June. The bulk of closures will take place on weekends, with the closure locations spread throughout the city. Certain branches — including the main downtown library — will continue with their hours unchanged.	<u>https://southseattleemerald.com/2024/04/15/news-gleams-18-million-in-federal-funding-headed-to-the-south-end-shortened-public-library-hours/#SPL-shortened-hours</u>
15-Apr-2024	KUOW	<u>Reduced hours, closures hit Seattle Public Library branches amid city's budget struggles</u>	If you headed to a public library in Seattle over the weekend, you may have found your local branch was closed. Last week, Seattle Public Library announced it was cutting hours at several branches across the city because of staffing challenges. The decision comes as SPL and the city navigate a \$240 million budget gap that's impacting agencies across the city.	<u>https://www.kuow.org/stories/shortened-hours-and-closures-hit-seattle-public-library-branches</u>

15-Apr-2024	KTHH-AM	<u>Rantz: Homeless addicts the real reason for Seattle Public Library closures</u>	The Seattle Public Library (SPL) closures announcement means branches are dark one day a week. But the decision has been shrouded in misinformation and a lack of transparency. While local media and politicians cite a staffing crisis that ostensibly began in 2008, the truth tells a different story. This decision comes from homeless addicts burdening the system.	<u>https://mynorthwest.com/3956834/rantz-homeless-addicts-reason-seattle-public-library-closures/</u>
14-Apr-2024	West Seattle Blog	<u>West Seattle Sunday: 10 notes</u>	High Point Library closed: The branch at 3411 SW Raymond is closed Sundays through at least early June as part of a schedule shuffle as the system deals with staffing shortages.	<u>https://westseattleblog.com/2024/04/west-seattle-sunday-10-notes-6/</u>
14-Apr-2024	KOMO-TV	<u>Seattle Public Library temporarily closing select branches through June 4</u>	Seattle Public Library (SPL) announced there would be scheduled intermittent branch closures at several locations through Tuesday, June 4 due to limited staffing capacity.	<u>https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-public-library-to-temporarily-close-select-branches-starting-april-14-books-closure-staffing-issues-leave-impact-reading-resources-building-safety</u>

14-Apr-2024	My Northwest	<u>Homeless addicts the real reason for Seattle Public Library closures</u>	SPL's intermittent closures, set to continue through at least June, are not due to a genuine staffing shortfall. In fact, Seattle library staff numbers have grown since 2019, before the pandemic. The real issue? The libraries have become battlegrounds for the city's housing and drug crises, necessitating increased staff for safety, not service.	<u>https://mynorthwest.com/3956834/rantz-homeless-addicts-reason-seattle-public-library-closures/</u>
14-Apr-2024	Q13	<u>Seattle Public Library announces closures through June 4</u>	Seattle Public Library says it's scheduling intermittent branch closures through June 4 due to limited staffing capacity.	<u>https://www.fox13seattle.com/video/1441025</u>
13-Apr-2024	KIRO 7	<u>Budget issues forcing rolling closures at Seattle Public Libraries</u>	Seattle Public Libraries are facing a new chapter this weekend. Staffing shortages and city-wide budget issues mean that several branches are experiencing temporary closures and reduced hours.	<u>https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/budget-issues-forcing-rolling-closures-seattle-public-libraries/HJQJY3UU2RDXT5FIMH3DM5QOY/</u>
13-Apr-2024	Hoodline	<u>Seattle Public Library announces reduced hours amid staff shortages and budget cuts</u>	The doors to knowledge are temporarily closing in Seattle, with the announcement that the Seattle Public Library system will see a significant reduction in hours across most neighborhood branches through early June.	<u>https://hoodline.com/2024/04/seattle-public-library-announces-reduced-hours-amid-staff-shortages-and-budget-cuts/</u>

12-Apr-2024	Scripps News	<u>Brooklyn Public Library's initiative to combat book bans in America</u>	Books Unbanned is an initiative started by the Brooklyn Public Library aimed at combating book censorship in some parts of the country. The initiative makes their entire collection available digitally to any young person in the country under 18. Since launching this program, four other libraries have followed suit, including the Seattle Public Library.	<u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4djacTGIIqM</u>
12-Apr-2024	The Center Square	<u>More than 20 Seattle libraries to see rolling closures due to city hiring freeze</u>	Last month, library employees warned Seattle city councilmembers that library closures will come soon and that employees are already experiencing burnout from increased workload.	<u>https://www.thecentersquare.com/washington/article_4764598a-f8ff-11ee-abcf-8bda32968d0b.html</u>
11-Apr-2024	Publisher's Weekly	<u>BPL, SPL Release Joint Report on Banned Books</u>	The Brooklyn Public Library and the Seattle Public Library have released a joint report, "In Their Own Words: Youth Voices on Books Unbanned," documenting responses from library patrons ages 13-26 who participated in the libraries' Books Unbanned program, which distributed nearly 13,000 library cards to young people across the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico, granting them free access to the libraries' digital collections.	<u>https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/newsbrief/index.html?record=4628</u>

11-Apr-2024	Seattle City Council Blog	<u>'This is a wake-up call': Councilmember Morales statement on Seattle Public Library closures</u>	I am calling on my colleagues to work with me and explore ways we can ensure corporations and the wealthiest in our city are paying their fair share. It's the only way we protect our libraries and the services all of us depend on," said Councilmember Morales.	https://council.seattle.gov/2024/04/11/this-is-a-wake-up-call-councilmember-morales-statement-on-seattle-public-library-closures/
11-Apr-2024	My Northwest	<u>Staffing crisis forcing closures of Seattle Public Library locations through June</u>	Despite struggling to rebuild operations affected by COVID-19, the library reported success in recruitment and hiring. It exceeded pre-pandemic open hours in 2023, fulfilling a promise to expand services outlined in a 2019 property tax levy. The \$219 million levy also set goals to eliminate late fees, which the library accomplished. Another objective, to improve facilities, remains an ongoing process plagued in some cases by rising construction costs. But amid that progress, the Library faced a setback. An escalating series of reported "disruptive behavioral incidents" prompted an increase in minimum staffing levels at numerous Seattle locations to maintain security.	https://mynorthwest.com/3957213/staffing-crisis-forcing-closures-seattle-public-library-locations/

11-Apr-2024	KING5	<u>Seattle Public Library system announces neighborhood branch closures</u>	Most neighborhood branches of the Seattle Public Library system will be closed intermittently through June 4.	<u>https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/seattle-public-library-system-neighborhood-branch-closures/281-0ed6509b-4748-41b1-841c-6ae57d541baf</u>
11-Apr-2024	Seattle Times	<u>Seattle Public Library resorting to rolling branch closures</u>	Seattle Public Library has scheduled closures of some branches beginning this weekend and lasting through at least early June due to staffing challenges. It's in an effort to cut down on having to lock the doors without notice, which has frustrated library users in recent months.	<u>https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattle-public-library-resorting-to-rolling-branch-closures/</u>
11-Apr-2024	CascadePBS/Crosscut	<u>Seattle Public Library announces temporary closures into June</u>	In the face of staffing shortages, Seattle Public Library (SPL) announced plans to reduce hours at branches throughout the city from April 14 until June 4.	<u>https://crosscut.com/briefs/2024/04/seattle-public-library-announces-temporary-closures-june</u>
11-Apr-2024	Q13	<u>Seattle Public Libraries changing hours, closing branches amid staffing woes</u>	Seattle Public Library (SPL) has been forced to adjust hours and intermittently close branches this spring due to widespread staffing shortages.	<u>https://www.fox13seattle.com/news/seattle-public-libraries-changing-hours-closing-branches-amid-staffing-woes</u>
11-Apr-2024	The Stranger	<u>The Seattle Public Library Announces 1,500 Hours of Closures in the Next Eight Weeks</u>	This morning, the Seattle Public Library (SPL) announced 180 days of library closures from April 12 to June 2, adding up to nearly 1,500 hours of cuts to a critical public service. All branches will be closed one day per week, with a few exceptions.	<u>https://www.thestranger.com/news/2024/04/11/79463199/the-seattle-public-library-announces-1500-hours-of-closures-in-the-next-eight-weeks</u>

11-Apr-2024	Capitol Hill Blog	<u>Seattle Public Library, facing another workforce crunch, slices hours including temporarily cutting Sundays at Capitol Hill branch</u>	Continuing staffing issues has the Seattle Public Library system pulling back on service and hours at branches across the city over the coming weeks.	https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2024/04/seattle-public-library-facing-another-workforce-crunch-slices-hours-including-temporarily-cutting-sundays-at-capitol-hill-branch/
11-Apr-2024	West Seattle Blog	<u>Seattle Public Library cuts back schedule, including fewer days at three West Seattle branches</u>	SPL has just announced a temporary cutback that will leave only one local branch open every day. SPL says staffing shortages, combined with the city hiring freeze, will lead to cutbacks for at least the next eight weeks. According to this SPL update, 22 of its 27 branches will be affected, including these three in our area.	https://westseattleblog.com/2024/04/seattle-public-library-cuts-back-schedule-including-fewer-days-at-three-west-seattle-branches/
11-Apr-2024	KIRO Newsradio	<u>Staffing crisis forcing closures of Seattle Public Library locations through June</u>	The Seattle Public Library (SPL) will be closing 22 of its 27 locations for at least one day per week until the beginning of June, amid ongoing and increasingly problematic staffing shortages.	https://mynorthwest.com/3957213/staffing-crisis-forcing-closures-seattle-public-library-locations/
10-Apr-2024	Seattle Times	<u>How SPL's Books Unbanned card is fighting censorship</u>	Book censorship, bans and restrictions remain a pressing challenge for youth across the country, according to a Books Unbanned report released Wednesday by the Seattle Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library.	https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/books/how-spls-books-unbanned-card-is-fighting-censorship/

9-Apr-2024	Secret Seattle	Crack Open A Book For National Library Week 2024	<p>National Library Week is a great time to go to your local Seattle Public Library and sign up for your very own library card. It runs from April 7-13 and will feature lots of wonderful workshops and events at your local library. But the real secret is that our local public libraries here in Seattle offer community classes, workshops, events, and activities every single week of the year. ...The Seattle Public Library encourages everyone to come and use all of the many resources available to the public. This includes asking a librarian for help. Librarians are the true treasures at the library. Go befriend your local librarians this week.</p>	https://secretseattle.co/national-library-week-seattle/
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8-Apr-2024	KUOW	<u>Poems hang from the rafters across Seattle as part of 'Poetry in Place'</u>	"I got a poem that was about Seattle Public Library, one that was about displacement in the Central District, one that was about urban beekeeping, and one that was related to Little Saigon," Pai said. "So each of those poems are very place specific. And so there was a lot of thought that went into how to display those with partners in the community." ...In addition to "Atmospheric River" at Seattle Municipal Tower, there are poems at Wa Na Wari in the Central District, the Downtown Central Library, Slide Gallery in Belltown, Friends of Little Saigon, The Bureau of Fearless Ideas in Greenwood and the South Park Library.	<u>https://www.kuow.org/stories/seattle-poetry-in-place-april-2024</u>
7-Apr-2024	West Seattle Blog	<u>CLOSURE ALERT: High Point Library closed today because of 'insufficient staffing'</u>	The Seattle Public Library's High Point branch is normally open 10 am-6 pm on Sundays, but is closed today – its webpage blames "insufficient staffing." Also noted online: "The book return will remain open and holds will be extended." Checking around the SPL site, we see our area's other branches all appear to be open, until 6 pm as usual.	<u>https://westseattleblog.com/2024/04/closure-alert-high-point-library-closed-today-because-of-insufficient-staffing/</u>

5-Apr-2024	Seattle Times	Join us: Live discussion on how WA treats serious mental illness	On Thursday, May 9, we invite you to join The Seattle Times and KUOW for a discussion on the mental illness crisis. The event will be held at Seattle Public Library's downtown location, at 1000 Fourth Ave., on May 9 from 6:30-8 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m.	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mental-health/join-us-live-discussion-on-how-wa-treats-serious-mental-illness/
5-Apr-2024	The Memory Hub (UW)	Memory Hub Spotlight: Emily Billow, Seattle Public Library	In this spotlight, Emily talks about how the Seattle Public Library has worked with the Memory Hub to deliver resources and what being part of a dementia-friendly community means to her.	https://depts.washington.edu/mbwc/theme/memoryhub/article/emily-billow
4-Apr-2024	Curiosity - Seattle	Here's where you can watch the partial solar eclipse in Seattle	Looking at the Sun can damage your eyes, so UW Astronomy and the Seattle Astronomical Society will have telescopes and eclipse glasses available so you can view it safely." Over the past week, The Seattle Public Library also had eclipse glasses available for free.	https://curiosity.com/where-watch-partial-solar-eclipse-seattle/
4-Apr-2024	Curiosity - Seattle	There are two big book sales happening in Seattle this April & items are \$4 or less	The sales are being put on by the Friends of The Seattle Public Library, a non profit, grassroots organization dedicated to elevating the Library and inspiring the love of reading in local communities.	https://curiosity.com/friends-of-the-seattle-public-library-book-sales-april

3-Apr-2024	Seattle Times	<u>Robert Dugoni's latest thriller is set in 1930s Seattle</u>	I called the Seattle Public Library, which has always been a great resource, and talked to [an employee] named Emily. I told her what I was interested in, and she was able to find me maps of downtown Seattle that included the businesses that were there at the time. I was able to use real names, real businesses ... The Green Parrot Theater, [Frederick & Nelson], the soda foundation at [Frederick & Nelson]. She was really great [at] getting me into the setting because when you write historical fiction, the setting is very much a character in the book.	https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/books/robert-dugonis-latest-thriller-is-set-in-1930s-seattle/
2-Apr-2024	COLA Today (S. Carolina)	<u>One Book, One Community book unveiling</u>	The One Book, One Community project began in the Seattle public library system in 1998, inviting communities to read and discuss the same book over a designated period. Columbia embraced the project in 2011, leading to years of programming centered around a single book.	https://colatoday.6amcity.com/events/one-book-one-community-book-unveiling

2-Apr-2024	Salt Lake Magazine (Utah)	<u>Six must-visit neighborhoods in Seattle</u>	Seattle’s Downtown is home to the Seattle Central Library (spl.org)– 11 stories of modern architecture that provide mentally stimulating spaces to read or contemplate life. Look out for the collection of independent Zines and walk the Red Floor, which is completely red–floor, walls, ceiling, everything.	<u>https://www.saltlake-magazine.com/seattle-in-the-spring/</u>
2-Apr-2024	South Seattle Emerald	<u>Public Poetry Campaign</u>	It’s April — Happy Poetry Month! To celebrate, Seattle Civic Poet Shin Yu Pai is launching a citywide poetry campaign featuring poems from five Seattle poets — Kathya Alexander, Bryna Antonia (Á Thanh) Cortes, Cindy Luong, Joe Nasta, and Bryan Wilson — in seven locations. So look out for posters and postcards designed by Jayme Yen with the poems at The Seattle Public Library (downtown and South Park), Wa Na Wari, Friends of Little Saigon, Seattle Municipal Tower, and Slide Gallery in Belltown.	<u>https://southseattleemerald.com/2024/04/02/arts-in-the-south-end-april-2024-roundup/</u>

1-Apr-2024	The Seattle Times	Rant and Rave: Reader enjoyed library reading challenge The Seattle Times	<p>Rave to the fourth and fifth graders at Seattle Public Schools who participated in the Seattle Public Library’s Global Reading Challenge. And kudos to the librarians who picked such excellent books and orchestrated a three-tiered competition with the sophistication and suspense of an NCAA basketball tournament. The finals were a blast. Nice job, Seattle.</p>	https://www.seattletimes.com/life/lifestyle/rant-and-rave-reader-enjoyed-library-reading-challenge/?utm_source=RSS&utm_medium=Referral&utm_campaign=RSS_all
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