The Seattle Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
11:00 a.m. Thursday, March 27, 2025

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

Remote Listen Line:
Dial: 213-282-4570 / Phone conference ID: 697 748 823#

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-To provide public comment in person at the Central Library, sign up in the meeting room.
-To provide public comment remotely, join meeting with link above and enter your full name in Q&A.
-To submit public comment in writing, email 24-hours in advance of the meeting: library.board@spl.org.

Agenda

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. CONSENT
    1.   Minutes of February 27, 2025 Regular Library Board Meeting

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT
    1. Chief Librarian Report
    2. System Report
        a. 2024 Library Foundation Grant Funding – Kiersten Nelson, Community
           Partnerships and Government Relations Program Manager

F. OLD BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS
    1. 2024 Q4/Year End Levy Report
    2. 2024 Cyberattack After Action Review Report
    3. Rules of Conduct Update
    4. 2025-2026 Chief Librarian Performance Review Process
    5. Union Report
    6. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
    7. Updates from Library Board Members

H.   EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. ADJOURN

J. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: April 24, 2025

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

Board of Trustees Meeting
The Seattle Public Library
February 27, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on February 27, 2025. Library Board President W. Tali Hairston called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Vice President Yazmin Mehdi and Trustee Carmen Bendixen were in attendance. Trustees Faith Pettis and Ron Chew were unable to attend. The meeting was conducted with a remote attendance option via video conference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

CONSENT

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

CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

Chief Librarian Report
Mr. Fay noted the 2024 Year End Financial Report and thanked Administrative Services Director Rob Gannon, Head of Finance and Accounting Nick Merkner, and the Finance team for all of their work in an extremely challenging year with the ransomware event and issues with the new Workday payroll system. He said the team has gone above and beyond this past year.

Mr. Fay said 2025 is the Library's fifth year of fine-free borrowing, about which he recently spoke at a City Council committee meeting. He said the Library has good, in-depth analysis of what this has meant, and he appreciates the team's efforts. He said at the outset, there were concerns that materials would be returned later, but time has shown that materials are returned at nearly the same rate. He said no fines translates to more kids being able to have the joy of reading.

Mr. Fay said the Library expanded open hours starting on January 29. He said 13 locations are now open seven days a week, with all others open six days. He said the University Branch closed at the end of January for a construction project that will extend through late 2026. He said the Museum Pass Program is temporarily suspended as the Library transitions to a new vendor after the previous vendor closed abruptly. He said the Library's app development project is wrapping up and a new app will be available in the coming months.

Mr. Fay said he attended the Friends Board and Foundation Board retreats in February. He said the Friends are doing a lot of great work with the school community and getting books into teachers' classrooms. He said the Friends have a great partnership with the Foundation, and he is pleased that the work of the two organizations is flowing well. He said members of the Friends and the Foundation were with him in Olympia on Library Legislative Day on February 5. He said they had an opportunity to meet nearly every Representative or their staff to encourage a study on e-materials subscription models, pricing alternatives, and the potential for perpetual models of purchase so that libraries can own material outright, rather than obtaining them on a subscription basis. He said it was also an opportunity to create awareness for the need for state aid around

collections. He said libraries were hoping to find champions for those issues, and were able to raise interest. He said there was good work done by the Joint Advocacy Team.

Mr. Fay said he attended a meeting of the Public Library Directors of Washington to discuss current library concerns in Washington and across the country, especially around federal funding. He said he also attended the Greenwood Branch 20th Anniversary celebration. He said the celebration was fun and was attended by Representative Julia Reed, after she was invited during Legislative Day. Mr. Fay thanked staff for their work and the Foundation for funding the event.

Mr. Fay said he also attended an invitation-only Knight Foundation Library Directors conference. He said past conferences have been for cities where Knight Publications are located, but they have expanded in recent years to include other cities doing interesting work, and Seattle has been included for the past four or five years. Mr. Fay said he was asked to speak at the conference, and he hosted a panel presentation with colleagues Skye Patrick from Los Angeles County Library and Vickery Bowles from Toronto Public Library. He said it was a great interactive discussion and learning experience about challenges ahead, tactics, and strategies with long-time library leaders and several folks newer to library leadership and political areas.

Library Board President Tali Hairston asked if there was anything in the Knight Foundation Conference that caught Mr. Fay's attention in terms of trends. Mr. Fay said no to trends, but of interest was the attendance by some large philanthropists and Carnegie. Mr. Fay said SPL is in the running for a fairly substantial grant from Carnegie. He said it was very interesting to hear where the big philanthropists' interests are around investing in libraries and the First Amendment. Mr. Fay said he also spoke with the director of the Cleveland Public Library about an interesting presentation on large philanthropic efforts to fund or support local and community-driven journalism. He said there may be an opportunity in Seattle to help facilitate discussions in communities if that funding were to be made available. He said community journalism will likely be one of the most important facets of journalism in the next several years.

Library Board Vice President Yazmin Mehdi said she wanted to acknowledge the system reports in the meeting packet which contain great information. She said it was good to note that maintenance staff have seen increased workload due to allowing food and drink in the Library. She said she appreciated a discussion in the Security Team report about de-escalation techniques that security officers are using and training other Library staff to use. She said using de-escalation instead of force or other measures is to be commended. Ms. Mehdi said she understands that fallout from the cyber-attack continues, and noted some data loss in the Security Team's reporting. Ms. Mehdi said she enjoyed the story about the Marine Digest, which is wonderful to have access to. She said the digitization project and addition of metadata is remarkable work. Regarding the fine-free program, Ms. Mehdi said she is happy that people don't have fines at the Library; and she said she didn't realize the frequency with which SPL receives unsolicited suggestions for programs. Ms. Mehdi said the staff reports are full of very interesting information; she said she reads and appreciates the reports.

Mr. Hairston asked about the backlog of 70,000 materials that was processed in three weeks. Mr. Fay said there had been some overtime, but the vast majority of the work was conducted during regular hours. He said the teams did an excellent job of working and maneuvering in a very full space, as well as an amazing job receiving materials in the branches when thousands of materials were coming back. Mr. Fay said everyone did an amazing job processing and shelving a huge number of materials. Ms. Mehdi also commended the work done. Mr. Fay noted that particularly impressive was that a lot of this effort was done manually. He said instructions were sent out on paper during weekly deliveries to make sure staff knew the order of processing and other details. He said adjusting to that kind of change and slowed communication is very challenging.

Systems Reports
Strategic Planning Implementation Groups

Strategy and Policy Advisor Jessica Smith said she would discuss the project review timeline, implementation toolkit, project plan development, project plan metrics the team is using, project status and how that is being tracked, as well as the presentation and feedback process being done with the different project teams. Ms. Smith shared her screen to show the trustees a visual of the original project review timeline. She said the kickoff was in November of 2024 after the trustees approved the plan on November 21. She said the team then initiated the project planning process with project sponsors and owners. She said project plans were due by owners to their sponsors on January 3 for review and refinement on January 17. She said a decision was made to work in phased rounds to ensure that the most impactful projects were being reviewed first, as some of the projects will create a dependency for other projects in the future. Ms. Smith said, staring next month, all projects will have monthly meetings between sponsors and owners, and will then have quarterly reviews and oversight by the Senior Management Team, along with annual review and goal setting. She said plans will be revised by sponsors and owners as needed, with approval by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Empowerment Team (E-Team).

Ms. Smith showed an example of the implementation toolkit, which she said contained the purpose, implementation cycle, roles and responsibilities, practices and tools, project management practices, oversight practices, and planning and goal setting. She said the implementation coordinator role is optional and can be used when a project owner needs help coordinating their team for meeting scheduling and note taking. She said Appendix A shows the Phase One Priority Project Sponsors and Owners document which describes the outcome, goal, specific activities, and the sponsors and owners assigned to those activities. She said Appendix B is a Project Plan Template that project owners completed, as well as a Quarterly Review Template. She said each project has its own document that will be tracked and reviewed by SMT and her. Ms. Smith said the Project Plan Development Process is a standard format for all project plans and all project teams that restates the project impact outcome and goals, project metrics, and tasks including the responsible party, priority, status of each task, and start and end dates. She said there is also a section to take notes, ask questions, and raise concerns for review.

Ms. Smith shared a high-level overview of Project Plan Metrics showing project plans delivered on time and the Project Plan review status as of February 24. She said presentation of the projects to the SMT was broken up into rounds, and the teams are working to ensure that project kick-offs are prioritized to allow for capacity across the system as staff continue to do regular work in addition to these projects. She showed a list of projects and provided brief updates regarding the project status in terms of prioritization, date of presentation to the SMT, and steps needed to proceed. Ms. Smith discussed the presentation and feedback standard format for projects being presented to the SMT. She said presentations include a standard slide deck that covers project overview, project schedule, operational impacts, project challenges, input required by the Senior Management Team, and questions from SMT. She said, as the SMT reviews the projects, they look for missing information, feasibility of the timeline, available capacity, strategic plan impact, project readiness, additional questions, and recommendations. She said the goal is to keep planning as standard as possible across all of the projects, including providing standard reviews.

Ms. Mehdi said Ms. Smith's presentation was helpful in understanding how the Library is implementing the Strategic Plan in a methodical way. She asked how the Library will roll out accomplishments and regular updates to the public. Mr. Fay said the Library's website has a Strategic Plan section that is broken down into a variety of categories for tracking the progress. He said there will also be public meetings. Ms. Mehdi said she would like to see information shared proactively, as it is important for people to see the outcome of the work and to lay the groundwork for the next levy. Mr. Fay said he would have the heads of the Marketing and Online Services division and the Communications division speak to the Board about the communications plan. Ms. Mehdi thanked Ms. Smith for her presentation and the care being taken in how the implementation plans are being put together, as well as how the Library is monitoring the work. Answering a question from Ms. Mehdi about the breadth of work, Ms. Smith said the information presented

today is from phase one of the implementation plan, and covers projects planned for 2024 through 2026 based on known available budget and capacity. She said phase two will be 2027 through 2028, followed by a longer phase three. Ms. Smith said an additional phase may be added.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Hairston reopened the public comment period to allow comment from an attendee who was unable to sign up prior to the comment period. Yashar Shayan said he is an Iranian American. He said he is seeking greater recognition for the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) community in line with SPL's prioritization of equity, diversity, and inclusion. He said the MENA community has experienced a lack of representation and misrepresentation leading to the dehumanization and disregard of MENA people. He said the community is seeking equitable recognition and representation with programming and greater engagement with SPL. He said the MENA community sees how SPL recognizes other ethnicities and communities, and holidays such as Lunar New Year, in programming and social media posts, and he said the MENA community would also like to be recognized in an equitable way. He said the MENA holidays of Ramadan and Nowruz are coming up, and he said April is MENA heritage month. He asked the SPL to recognize the MENA community in line with its recognition of other communities.

Systems Reports
2025 Seattle Reads Program: "You Are Here: Poetry in the Natural World," edited by U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón
Literature and Humanities Program Manager Stesha Brandon said this year's selection builds on many themes that were discussed as part of Seattle Reads in 2024 and invites readers to consider their relationship with the natural world. She said the book is a short anthology with 50 accessible but high-quality poems by different U.S. poets. She said the collection includes themes of environmental justice, the human relationship with the natural world, grief, and the power of nature. She said this is the second time a poetry anthology has been selected for Seattle Reads, and the collection includes two local contributors, Laura Da' and Cedar Sigo. Ms. Brandon said Ada Limón is a rockstar in the poetry world, is the current U.S. Poet Laureate, and is the author of six poetry collections and two children's books. She said Ms. Limón received a MacArthur Genius Grant in 2023 and wrote a poem that has been engraved on NASA's Europa Clipper Spacecraft, which was then launched to the second moon of Jupiter last October.

Ms. Brandon said the Library will host 24 programs over the course of several months, which have been gathered into several strands – Listen, Learn, Discover and Share – and will provide the opportunity to celebrate the book as well as the amazing poetry landscape in Seattle. She said details are still being finalized, and highlights will include three programs with Ms. Limón in May. She said there will be eight poetry potlucks, around the system, where attendees can share their own favorite poems that have an environmental or natural theme. She said there will be three poetry workshops open to the public and six author programs, including poetry readings and an on-stage conversation with environmental journalist Linda Mapes. She said this year's programs will also include a live taping with the KUOW Book Club which is featuring this book as their April book club pick. Ms. Brandon said because this year's collection has such a wide reach, the Library is able to work with many partners it has developed relationships with in the last several years including the African American Writers Alliance, Creative Aging at the Frye, Hugo House, the KUOW Book Club, LaSala, the Memory Hub, Open Books, Poetry Northwest, Pongo Poetry Project, 4Culture Poetry in Public, and Seattle Arts & Lectures' Youth Poetry Fellowship.

Ms. Brandon said, as in past years, 25% of uncatalogued copies are being set aside for prioritized audiences and will be distributed through partners at community centers and specific book groups. She said the Library is also working with Pongo Poetry Project to provide 150 copies of the book to court-involved youth in juvenile detention and rehabilitation. She said several programs are specifically designed for prioritized audiences, including two art and poetry workshops at the Frye, one of which is specifically for folks living with dementia and their carers. She said there

will be a poetry comics workshop as part of the Crafternoon series at the Central Library. She said the Library is also working with Claudia Castro Luna to create a Spanish language storytelling and story making workshop at the South Park Branch. Ms. Brandon said the Foundation is hosting a program kickoff on March 26th at the Central Library.

Library Board Trustee Carmen Bendixen asked if poets featured in the book will also be doing events. Ms. Brandon said local poet Laura Da' will join for the March 26 kickoff, and both Ms. Da' and Peter Saigo will be featured at the KUOW Book Group. She said an evening program will feature poetry reading with Ms. Da' and Cedar Sigo. Ms. Brandon said she is hoping to put together an additional program with Ms. Da' who is interested in celebrating indigenous writers that live locally, and she hopes to work with the elder poet Duane Niatum. Ms. Bendixen said she is excited about the idea of a poetry potluck. Ms. Brandon said that Ballard Branch Librarian Lynn Miller has been hosting poetry potlucks for more than 20 years at the Ballard Branch, and it was Ms. Miller's idea to open the program to more branches. Ms. Brandon said poetry potlucks can remove a feeling of pressure. She said sometimes people feel like they don't understand poetry, and sharing poetry enables people to be exposed to more poets and not feel like they need to understand exactly what the poem means to enjoy it.

Ms. Mehdi asked about the previous Seattle Reads poetry selection and lessons learned that were applied this time. Ms. Brandon said the last time poetry was selected was a Bill Moyers anthology in 2001, prior to her joining the Library. She said Mark Doty, Jane Hirschfield, and Bill Moyers participated in programming. Ms. Brandon said she would describe herself as "poetry-curious" in that she likes poetry, but doesn't always understand it. She said when she picked up this year's selection, she was struck by two things right away; first, that the book is only 50 poems, so it's not so daunting, and if one poem didn't speak to her, there was another poet on the next page. She said the book features some of the best poets writing right now and is very accessible. She said she read the book over the course of a month, reading a couple of poems each morning, which was a great way to start the day. Ms. Medhi thanked Ms. Brandon for the information and said she is also poetry curious and will read the book. Ms. Brandon said another thing that makes the book accessible is that Ms. Limón wrote a beautiful introduction asking readers to consider where they fit into the natural world, whether it be passing a tree on their walk to the bus, having a backyard garden, or enjoying hiking, and she invited readers to write their own "You Are Here" poem.

NEW BUSINESS

Software Acquisition and Artificial Intelligence
Library Technology Officer Charles Wesley said Technology Acquisition and Artificial Intelligence (AI) policies are in development. He said, as seen in the Strategic Plan, these issues will influence the work and operations of the Library, so it is very important to go through them thoughtfully. He said he would like to provide some context and explain why things like scheduling software and an AI Policy are interlinked. He said the memo in the meeting packet contains links to some City policies and procedures that are good context at a high level. Mr. Wesley said City of Seattle Policy 209 sets forth requirements for City departments to observe when acquiring or using software that meets the definition of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI). He said Gen AI is evolving, and the City has done a lot of good and thoughtful work to develop a policy that establishes some guidelines for using this technology with a mind toward equity, privacy, and other priorities the City has set as stewards of information. He said their policy also has good operational definitions about evaluating technology. He said the Library does need to adhere to this policy. He said the City also has a standard, STA 209, regarding acquisition of technology resources. He said City policies are written so that the AI Policy is an add-on, or an extra qualifier, for how technology is acquired in general. He said the City's policy on AI says that as part of the technology acquisition process, if it has Gen AI component, the policy will apply.

Mr. Wesley said because the Library is a non-executive department, it is exempt from the requirements in the City's technology acquisition processes. He said, in order for the Library to

adhere to a Generative AI policy, it also needs to have a policy governing the acquisition of technology in general. He said this policy will help the Library to be better positioned to be in compliance with the Gen AI policy. He said it is also very good to have a policy that governs how technology is acquired and integrated into the Library environment, even if it doesn't have generative AI capabilities, to provide the ability to do a cybersecurity review to understand how data will be handled. He said it will also allow SPL to ask questions about how it will be sustainably funded and supported. He said while having a technology acquisition policy is a very good follow up for the Library following the cyberattack, it is also an enabling policy for the Library, and it is convenient to branch into covering generative AI. Mr. Wesley said the technology acquisition policy will be an enabling policy for generative AI, and both policies will provide value both for Gen AI and for the Library more generally. He said where the Strategic Plan refers to AI, it is referring to both of the new policies. He said the acquisition of new scheduling software technology will be dependent on the development of these policies.

Mr. Wesley said the two new policies will be the high-level guardrails and guidelines for how these elements work at the Library. He said the policies will be brought forward for the Library Board's review and approval. He said, when those policies are in place, the next step will be the operationalization of the policies, which will have some administrative procedures and other implementation details for facilitating requests in terms of how the Library will review and approve software acquisition requests and retain a roster of approved technology. He said this will allow the Library to move forward with existing technology, as well as either approving or redirecting new requests to other solutions that may better meet the needs of the organization in terms of sustainability, security, and duplication.

Ms. Mehdi said she is unable to access the City's STA 209 without a City email address and asked if the Library would be adopting anything substantially different from the City's standard. Mr. Wesley said the Library will likely implement the City's standard as a baseline. He said the only deviation would be for a tie-in to the Library's mission and values for emphasizing intellectual freedom, freedom of access to information, patron privacy, and other Library-related issues. He said the Library generally prefers to align with the City's best practices as defined and only deviate where necessary. He said the primary reason for the Library being exempt from this City standard is that Library staff will not be submitting requests to City IT for technology because the City does not provide those services for the Library. He said the Library will have a parallel process within a closed loop of the Library's ecosystem.

Ms. Mehdi asked if SPL will look to see what other libraries have implemented around generative AI and general technology acquisition standards. Mr. Wesley said SPL is in contact with peer libraries to learn how they are doing this work. He said the Library is also working with partners on cybersecurity matters, including policy review, and the technology acquisition policy will be informed by best practices from a cybersecurity standpoint as well. He said considerations will include industry best practices in the library world as well as what is being done at the City. Ms. Mehdi asked if there is already some use of generative AI or ChatGPT within the Library. Mr. Wesley said the Library has not officially authorized staff to use ChatGPT or generative AI. He said having a policy will allow the Library to have a list of approved technology. He said there will need to be an inventory taken of existing technology for evaluation, and there will likely be some technology staff have been using independently that the Library will ask them to discontinue using. He said the policies will lay out the rules, and technology that aligns with the policies and can be managed securely can move forward, while those that don't align will not move beyond the acquisition process. He said there will be governance work to ensure due diligence in the acquisition process as well as ensuring that the use of the technology aligns with Library policies and values. He said governance will allow for questions to be raised and for decisions to be made proactively to manage specific circumstances. Ms. Mehdi thanked Mr. Wesley for his work in this area.

Union Report

President of AFSCME Local 2083 Jessica Lucas said the Library is now a few weeks into the implementation of fixed scheduling, which appears to be a positive change for staff, with a few outliers. She said the Fixed Scheduling Committee is going well and has been able to work together to problem-solve. She said she expects that to continue throughout the year, and expects next year's process to go even more smoothly. She said the first year of big changes are always a lot of work, and the Library and Union have successfully bargained some changes in workload and conditions for a certain work unit. She said the Union appreciates the collaboration of Library management in negotiations and the ability to come to a positive outcome. Ms. Luas said that union members share the interest of management to keep the Library staffed in a reliable, safe, and sustainable way, and the Union feels strongly confident that it is moving in that direction in the partnership. Ms. Mehdi said she is happy to hear there is a generally positive outlook on fixed scheduling, as it seemed it would add value to staff. Ms. Lucas said while the change takes a little bit of getting used to, the stability for staff members' lives makes a big difference and the Union appreciates it.

Updates from Library Board Members

Ms. Mehdi said she has attended two board meetings of the Friends of the Library. She said at their January meeting, the Friends Board passed their 2025 budget. She said they welcomed speaker Britney Moraski from the Foundation Board who shared upcoming advocacy challenges with a call to action to get involved. She said Ms. Moraski is doing a great job heading up one of the subcommittees of the Joint Advocacy Committee. She said the Friends are also working with the Friends of the Seattle Waterfront to bring books to the waterfront. She said the Friends Board held a retreat on February 1, which was previously mentioned by Mr. Fay. Ms. Mehdi said in their February meeting, the Friends Board discussed firming up details around paperback book giveaways at the waterfront, which they will begin doing on alternating Sundays beginning May 18th at Pier 62. She said the Friends will be tabling all over the city, starting in the spring. She said the Friends have also set up a new partnership with Town Hall (she said she is also on the board of Town Hall) and tabled at a Rick Steves event at Town Hall, and will also be tabling at an April 14 event for a book called, "Meet Me at the Library." She said when tabling, the Friends give out books as well as bookmarks promoting the Friends, Foundation, and the Public Library Action Network. She said they also give out tri-branded totes, and are doing a remarkable job of finding places to connect with people in great advocacy opportunities. Ms. Mehdi said three Friends Board members attended Library Legislative day, and the Friends are working with Library HR staff member Kimberly Cox to purchase gifts for 300 Library volunteers.

Ms. Bendixen said the Foundation Board met in January for their annual meeting to take care of business and elect their officers, and she was welcomed as the liaison for 2025. She said the Foundation will be recruiting a chief philanthropy officer in the coming months. She said Grace Nordhoff, who is a past president of the Foundation Board and a current member of the Emeritus Board, gave a presentation about the Urban Library Council (ULC). She said Ms. Nordhoff is one of three public members on ULC's board, and she gave an overview of the work that they're doing and what's coming up next. Ms. Bendixen said the Foundation gave an update on fundraising for 2024, which exceeded the yearly target as well as exceeding the 2023 total, raising more than $8 million. She said final figures will be shared next month.

<center>ADJOURN</center>

Library Board President Tali Hairston adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 27, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian

Re: March 2025 Chief Librarian's Report

1. First, I want to congratulate Trustee Carmen Bendixen on her March 18 reappointment to the Library Board for a second term. The Library greatly appreciates Carmen's dedication for the past five years, in which she has served as both Board president and vice president, and served on the Chief Librarian Search Committee. We value Carmen's time, experience, and engagement, and are fortunate to have her continued service.

2. On March 3, I attended the first of the 2025 Global Reading Challenge semi-final competition rounds held at the Central Library. Every year it is wonderful to see the excitement and hard work Seattle Public Schools' fourth and fifth grade readers put into learning with their teams, as well as their pride in accomplishment. This year's City Final will be held the evening of Wednesday, April 2, and I encourage you to attend to see this wonderful, affirming program!

3. Also on March 3, I met with Deputy Mayor Wong to begin discussions about the potential of a future Library levy. The Library's current seven-year levy expires at the end of 2026, and discussions with thought partners are under way to determine the best path forward for sustainable funding for Library operations.

4. March 5-6, I attended the EBSCO Public Library Leaders Advisory Board Meeting in Scottsdale, AZ. This advisory board brings together leaders from across the country to discuss library trends, funding and political concerns, and technology challenges and innovations. I along with my colleague Heidi Daniel, Executive Director of the King County Library System, presented on foresight and strategic planning, and how to shift tactics when confronted with new input or new conditions.

5. On March 13, I spoke at a Foundation CEO Lunch and Learn, hosted at the Queen Anne Branch by Foundation CEO Brian Lawrence. The Foundation is hosting a series of donor events to help raise awareness of the Foundation's partnership in supporting the Library, and to engage community members in donor support and advocacy opportunities.

6. For the first time, the Central Library proudly presents artwork created by employees of The Seattle Public Library. While our staff members channel their creativity every day in service to our community, this exhibit reveals another dimension of their artistic expression. The exhibit will run March 3 to April 25, and we hope you can stop by.

Meetings and events during this reporting period:
  a. Board Meetings: Monthly Library Board of Trustees meeting; monthly meeting of Library and Friends leadership; Friends Board meeting; Foundation Board Executive Committee meeting.

  b. Standing Meetings: Compensation Committee; Senior Management Team; E-Team; Monthly Managers meeting; Union/Leadership meetings; Foundation CEO/Chief Librarian bi-monthly meetings.

  c. Library Meetings, Talks, Interviews and Visits: Metro area library director meetings; ULC Director/CEO weekly meetings; EBSCO Public Library Leaders Advisory Board meeting in Scottsdale, AZ.

  d. City Meetings, Events and Programs: Deputy Mayor bi-weekly meeting; Councilmember Rivera monthly meeting; Mayor's Cabinet meeting.

LIBRARY AT A GLANCE
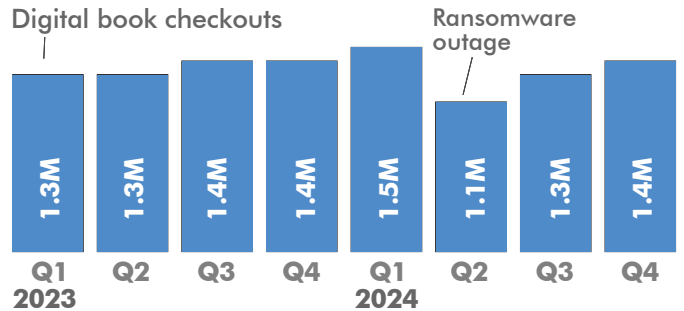
IN FOCUS: Digital Books

The Library is actively managing the cost of digital books as interest in digital books continues to grow.

Overview: Digital Books

The Library continues to expand access to e-books and e-audiobooks to meet growing popularity of digital books while navigating rising costs and evolving licensing models. Licensing terms determine how many patrons can check out a title at a time and when it must be relicensed for continued availability.
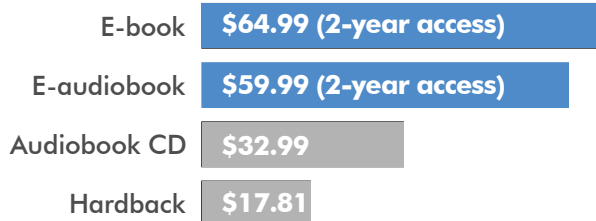
Digital books (e-books and e-audiobooks) now make up 50% of total circulation. To ensure broad and equitable access, the Library has adjusted checkout and hold limits and refined purchasing strategies for high-demand titles. These changes help balance demand while maintaining a diverse and sustainable digital collection.

Licensing Digital Books is Costly

E-book	**$64.99 (2-year access)**
E-audiobook	**$59.99 (2-year access)**
Audiobook CD	$32.99
Hardback	$17.81

Public libraries face high costs due to expensive, lease-based licensing for digital books, limiting collection growth. Chart shows recent pricing for "The Woman in Me" by Britney Spears.

Managing Costs For Popular Titles

% of digital book orders spent on high-demand titles

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
63%	59%	57%	63%	50%

The Library has recently taken measures to manage digital book book spending, including reducing the number of maximum digital holds. "High-demand" spending fell in 2024, which freed funds for broader collection development.

Checkouts Rebound Following Outage

Digital book checkouts

Ransomware outage

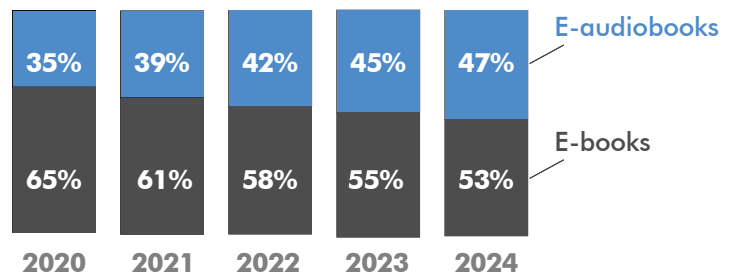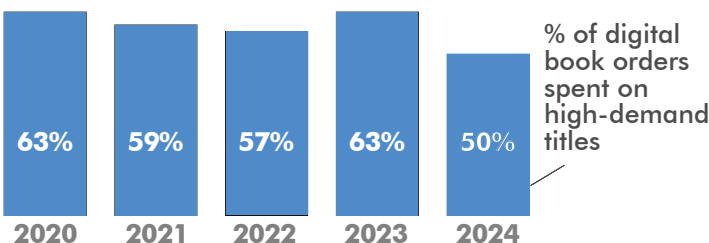| 2023				2024			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.3M	1.3M	1.4M	1.4M	1.5M	1.1M	1.3M	1.4M

Digital book checkouts were unavailable for most patrons for almost 3 weeks of the ransomware outage. Purchasing was also paused for nearly two months starting in May 2024.

E-Audiobooks Growning in Popularity

E-audiobooks

E-books

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
E-audiobooks	35%	39%	42%	45%	47%
E-books	65%	61%	58%	55%	53%

E-audiobooks have increased in popularity in recent years, now accounting for nearly half of checkouts.

More Patrons Are Using the Digital Collection

Count of patrons

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
137K	137K	151K	175K	188K
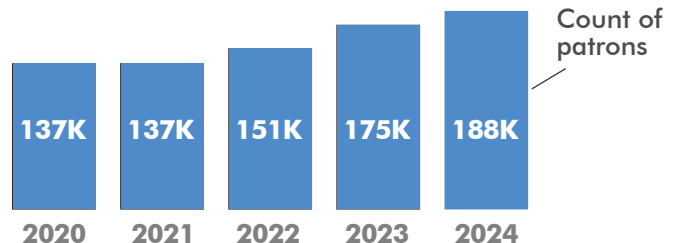
The number of patrons who check out e-books and e-audiobooks each year has increased by over 50K in the last five year and includes 8K patrons of Books Unbanned, which is funded by the Foundation.

Impact and Outcome Statements
1) Our community becomes stronger as a result of library activities that are inclusive, draw diverse participants, and promote understanding
2) Access to opportunities becomes more equitable in our community

North Regions Staff Involvement with All-Abilities Services and Programs

The Seattle Public Library offers All Abilities programming and resources to connect families supporting children with disabilities (with a focus on children on the autism spectrum) with accessible and inclusive library programming and services. The All Abilities team works with Library Equal Access Program (LEAP) staff and community partners to develop and provide these programs and services. A major goal of the All Abilities team is to extend programming, practices, and supports to other regions throughout SPL.

Northeast and Northwest regions have staff who are members of the All Abilities Work Group and contribute to the advancement and implementation of this work.

- Erin Moehring , Children's Librarian, leads the development of programs
- Michelle Tong, Library Associate IV, has developed Sensory Kits for all SPL locations and a trial Sensory Wall.

| Sensory wall at the Northeast branch | Sensory kits available at each branch location |

Sensory Kits

In November Sensory kits were made available at all 26 library branches and the Central Library's Children's Center for in-library use only. These kits were created to make the library more welcoming and accessible to all patrons. Sensory kits are for everyone, regardless of age or medical diagnosis.

Read more about the kits and the pilot sensory wall on our website: [Sensory Kits and Sensory Walls | The Seattle Public Library](#)

Sensory Wall

In January of 2025 Capital Improvement staff installed a sensory wall at the Northeast branch. This is a pilot program this year, paid for with gift funds from the Foundation. The wall is part of our efforts to make the library's physical environment more universally-welcoming and incorporate autism-friendly design throughout our locations.

This is a modular play wall that features wooden toys designed to engage young children's sense of sight, touch, and hearing. From turning gears to leading a metal ball through a maze, each activity supports fine motor development and can be paired with tools from the all branch sensory kits.

Programming

Programs are designed with the disability community to meet the needs of children of all abilities through sensory and other program modifications. Programming is informed and implemented through meaningful and expanded partnerships.

- **Inclusion Festival** is in its 4th year and is developed in partnership with Woodland Park Zoo, Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, Seattle Sensory Garden, and The Arc of King County. [Inclusion Festival | The Seattle Public Library](#).
- **All Ability Story Time** series launched in the Fall of 2024, and we saw anywhere from 15 – 55 people per session, and we offered a total of 9 All Ability Story Times at the Greenwood Branch, as well as an outreach session at [Lake City Collective](#) which had 23 people in attendance.
- **Sensory Friendly Music** programs hosted in partnership with [Music Center of the Northwest](#) saw steady attendance of 10-20 patrons per session, with a total of 28 sessions offered throughout the year at the Greenwood Branch.
- **Sensation Station** Programs were held three times at the Greenwood Branch. Sensation Station programs are co-designed alongside May-Ling Joa who specializes in special education. These programs are designed to offer an interactive learning environment featuring a variety of sensory stimulations including tactile, visual, auditory, and olfactory components.

In an effort to expand our audience beyond early learning, we were able to establish a new relationship with [Aaron's Place](#), a branch of [Northwest Child](#) that supports adults with developmental disabilities. Our relationship with this organization allows these adults to expand their community, and as a library we can learn how to better serve this audience moving forward. Lindsey Holley, their Program Director stated, "I have had such an amazing response from our students and staff about their time at the library!"

Librarian Erin Moehring reads a book to adults at Aaron's Place

Promoting a Culture of Safety and Continued Learning
March 12.2025

With contributions by HR Director Brian Sharkey, Interim Training and Development Manager Morganne Denae, and Safety Manager Jessica Guy.

In 2025 the SPL Human Resources (HR) team focuses on the creation of a new performance management system. Our Safety Officer continues to lead preventative and responsive efforts in coordination with the SPL Safety Committee. The training and development team priorities in-person and virtual learning opportunities to equip staff with tools for resilience and navigating difficult situations.

This brief report will highlight some of the key plans and successes in these three areas.

Performance

In December 2024, SPL received notice from the Seattle Human Resources department that the City of Seattle was ending their use of the E3 performance management system. This news came with very little opportunity for transition planning which led to some disruptions in our year end evaluation process.

SPL HR has begun the work of reviewing existing tools and processes to develop an in-house solution for performance management in 2025 and beyond. Once a full proposal is ready, the content will be discussed with our Union partners in the Joint Labor Management Committee.

The primary goal is to have a simplified performance management workflow in place in time for 2025 annual evaluations in Q4. At the present time, we expect to develop a fillable PDF evaluation form to be used and stored on the SharePoint platform. SPL will plan to utilize some or all of the same core competencies that were developed for the E3 platform. Those core competencies are: Accountability & Action, Communication, Equity & Inclusion, Service, and Teamwork. For people managers, there are two additional competencies: Direction & Delegation, and Aligns Performance for Success.

Training

2025 brings a host of great training initiatives and opportunities led by Training and Development Manager Morganne Denae. Here are a few of the priority projects:

- Strategic Plan Priority - Onboarding
    - o HR Training and Development will lead the effort for a new and improved onboarding process focused on continued learning throughout a new employee's first 3 months of employment and beyond.
    - o The project plan was completed in December 2024 and quarterly milestones as well as monthly meetings are set in place to ensure consistent progress toward the end result.
- Bystander Intervention
    - o Our goal is to provide support to all our staff to increase their knowledge of equity, race and social justice topics, while also providing hands-on experience with applying this knowledge in their day-to-day job. This training program for staff will be multi-faceted and delivered in a variety of formats.
- Access to External Professional Development
    - o SPL recently completed a new and improved Authorization for Conferences and Training (ACT) form.

- o This was launched along with our 2025 Educational Development Guidelines which were approved by JLMC and SMT in December 2024. These new guidelines provide more consistent guidance on attending conferences, trainings, events, etc. that align with both SPL's mission and staff members' professional development goals.

Safety

Jessica Guy, Health and Safety Manager, continues to lead our efforts in creating and maintaining a safe work environment. Safety Committee continues to meet monthly to discuss follow up to injury and accident reports, and to proactively address new concerns. A big success in the last two months was the purchase and distribution of emergency water for all SPL locations. This is a major step forward in providing additional resources for shelter in place emergency conditions. Other major efforts included upgrading fire extinguisher signs in multiple locations, completing the OSHA 300A annual reporting on workplace injuries, and engaging with staff on an individual basis to complete ergonomic assessments.

In 2025, Jessica will also support the Holistic Wellness priority area in the Strategic Plan focusing on areas where accident and injury prevention overlap with staff well-being. This priority area will work to consolidate a list of existing wellness benefits and create a wayfinding tool to help staff navigate the multitude of resources.

The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: **March 3, 2025**

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

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

Subject: **2024 Seattle Public Library Foundation Grant Award Summary Report**

In 2024, The Seattle Public Library (SPL) expended nearly 100 percent of The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF) $5.61 million grant award, leaving $12,715 unutilized. This memo summarizes both the Library's spending and programmatic outcomes.

Spending Summary -- 2024 Foundation Award

Funding Priority	2024 Award	2024 Spending	Balance Remaining
Providing Books & Materials	$1,905,916	$1,959,748	($53,832)
Hours & Access	$1,352,800	$1,180,923	$171,877
Literacy & Early Learning	$699,346	$546,171	$153,175
Technology & Online Services	$493,125	$648,108	($154,983)
Capital/Major Maintenance	$849,138	$882,695	($33,557)
Administrative Support	$287,136	$360,287	($73,151)
Branch Restricted Donations	$23,125	$19,939	$3,186
Total[1]	**$5,610,586**	**$5,597,871**	**$12,715**

The Library is exceptionally pleased to note that it utilized nearly all of the grant award from The Seattle Public Library Foundation in 2024. This spending summary highlights the significant programmatic efforts undertaken by staff in 2024 thanks to the generosity of the Foundation and its donors, and the impacts seen from that work.

Over the past four years, The Seattle Public Library has made a concerted effort to utilize the full amount of the grant funding awarded by the Foundation. The Library has been successful in

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[1] External Grants was not included in the above chart because they run across multiple years. Here is the 2024 summary:

Funding Priority	2024 Award	2024 Spending	Balance Remaining
External Grants	*$301,960*	*$175,572*	*$126,388*

increasing its expenditure rate as 2021 saw a 93 percent expenditure rate, 2022 was at 87 percent, and 2023 and 2024 were at 99.8 percent.

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

2024 was a year marked by upheaval and uncertainty in some respects and consistency in others. To start the year, a citywide hiring freeze was implemented creating staffing shortages and delays in filling much needed roles. Chief Librarian Fay was able to prioritize and exempt from the freeze key roles in order to keep much needed services operating and the Library system moving forward. While staff dealt with this challenge, the Library was the victim of a ransomware attack at the end of May that required halting technology access to nearly the entire system as the IT team conducted an assessment of compromised systems. Over the next three months, IT enabled access to various systems and returned The Seattle Public Library to normal operations by September, an unprecedently quick turnaround.

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

In 2024, $5.6 million was expended from the $5.61 million Foundation grant, achieving a spendrate of 99.8 percent. The increased funding level over the 2023 grant allocation included several carry-forward grants awards from the previous year.

The Library team, partnering with Foundation staff, began meeting regularly at the start of the year and were able to proactively reprogram funds on underspent programs, allowing the Library to achieve the nearly 100 percent spend of the 2024 grant. Including $100,000 for a patron survey to be conducted ahead of the 2026 levy, the Library achieved a spend rate of 125 percent for Administrative Services, 102 percent for Providing Books & Materials, 104 percent for Major Maintenance including funding for the Special Collections Project room, and 131 percent for Technology and Online Services that among other things supported the IT team's technology purchases in response to the ransomware attack. Categories with underspend include Hours & Access with an 87 percent spend rate and Literacy & Early Learning with a 78 percent spend rate.

Key reasons for overspend or underspend are as follows:
- Providing Books & Materials: The purchase of digital Seattle Reads books allowed for the complete use of this grant.
- Hours & Access: A major reason for underspend in this category stemmed from the Equity Discussion & Planning budget. Valerie Garrett-Turner, who led this effort, retired in 2024. Planning is underway on who and how to best move this priority forward.
- Technology & Online Services: The Library's overspend in this area stemmed from the reprogramming of funds to assist with purchase new computers across the system and other technology needs as the IT team responded to the ransomware attack.

- Literacy & Early Learning: The Early Learning program manager took a temporary assignment for a major portion of the year and the role was not backfilled. This led to a delay in spending in some program areas that typically fall to the discretion of this position. This accounted for 11 percent of the total funding for Early Learning and Literacy.
- Administrative Support: The overspend in this category resulted from the allocation of resources to conduct a patron survey ahead of the 2026 levy as well as staff appreciation funds and a new refrigerator and ice maker for Floor 4 at the Central Library. This category also includes consideration costs, professional development, and research & learning programs.
- Major Maintenance (CIP): Remaining carry-forward funds for the Northeast/Southwest HVAC project were expended at the start of the year, the Special Collections Project Room build, and support to fill funding gaps at the conclusion of the Green Lake Seismic Retrofit account for the overspend in this category.

Below you will find information and stories from patrons on how the grants provided by The Seattle Public Library Foundation for 2024 impact our service priorities, the community, and our shared values.

Providing Books & Materials

Granted: $1,905,916   **Expended: $1,959,748**

2024 Foundation grants included contributions to the African American, Biography and Literary Classics, Children's, Seattle Room, Preservation of the Collection, eBooks, and General Collection areas. It also funded pick-up lockers, the Japanese Collection, the Read-Along Books Collection, and important archival materials for the Seattle Collection. This support allowed for the ongoing development of these respective collections to enhance community experiences with the Library. The Foundation also funded the Books Unbanned program that provides digital library cards to youth (ages 13-26) across the United States and its territories, and access to the Library's entire electronic collection. SPL was the first library system in the nation to join the Brooklyn Public Library in this endeavor to increase information access to children and young adults. There are now five participating systems across the US. Foundation funding also enabled the Library to meet customer expectations for electronic and physical materials, as patrons' content consumption continue to shift rapidly to more digital formats.

Service Priorities:
Technology and Access, Seattle Culture and History, Community Engagement

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

Why this matters:
The collection is the Library's most visible and most used service. The Foundation enables SPL to achieve a level of collection excellence that would otherwise not be possible. In 2024, the Library continued to respond to community needs by increasing investment in digital materials and offering more ways to access physical materials through pick-up lockers.

Due to the ransomware attack, access to digital materials was severely hampered for several weeks. The physical collection was also impacted in a unique way due to the electronic nature of checking materials back into the system and sending it to the proper branches. In spite of these challenges,

the Collections team nimbly pivoted to address patrons' needs in the most effective way possible, allowing for complete disbursement of grant funds. With a generous and specific grant, the Library was also able to bolster the Japanese language collection with the purchase of 1,270 copies of 437 books, buy down the holds number for digital content, and identify target languages for 2025.

The Holds Pick-up Locker program continued to expand in 2024. Alongside funding from the State of Washington, SPL completed the installation of the Ballard Branch locker with the support of the Foundation. Plans are in place to add additional unique ways across the system to increase access to materials.

Patron Experience:
"Raising A Reader is such an important program to be able to offer our families. In addition to the books, our literacy events really provide families with important read aloud information and tips. So grateful for this program!"- Parent whose child participated, El Centro de la Raza.

"I want to express my surprise and gratitude to SPL-U-District branch for now offering books in Spanish. I am a Latina with the privilege to be bilingual but have many friends and family around the area that will love to know that they can have access to books in Spanish for adults in this branch. My family used to come frequently since 2016 to this branch and my son enjoyed the books in Spanish from here. Muchisimas gracias por incluir libros en espanol!" – a patron in response to the Spanish language collection moving to a floating model.

By the Numbers:
- SPL had 5.48 million OverDrive and e-materials checkouts and 5.47 million print items checkouts in 2024 thanks to Foundation support.
- 80,679 items were purchased and distributed directly from Foundation Funding.
- The Japanese Language grant secured 1,021 physical copies, including 75 titles suggested directly from patrons. Selections included books for adults and children including picture books, manga, adult nonfiction in a variety of subjects and adult nonfiction in a variety of genres.
- 363 physical books in Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish as well as 286 digital books in 11 languages were purchased using the World Language Collection grant.
- 2,000 mylar sleeving pages helped protect photoprints and negatives from the Dorpat Collection in 2024.

Hours & Access

Granted: $1,352,800   **Expended: $1,180,923**
This category of 2024 Foundation awards included enrichment programming such as lectures, author programs, and discussions on art, history, and social justice. It also supported art, music, and performance programs, engaging communities of color, supporting Seattle's most disadvantaged communities, and ensuring community members and leaders have a voice in the curation of our work. It allowed for continued outreach in Job and Life Skills programming as well as Workforce and Career Development. All of this work would not have been possible without Foundation support.

Service Priorities:
Technology and Access, Seattle Culture and History, Community Engagement, Youth and Family Learning

Community Impact:

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

Why this matters:
In spite of a hiring freeze and a ransomware attack that halted many services provided by the Library, staff committed to providing quality programming to patrons. Programs like Seattle Reads shifted already scheduled author events to the end of the year because of the cyberattack and the Library to Business program developed workarounds for supporting patron needs without access to their standard resources. Through all of this, the Library remains focused on finding ways in which its resources can be utilized to empower the lives of individuals and community groups, especially those furthest from racial, economic, digital, and social justice.

Patron Experience:
"Now, I can have simple conversations. Before, I felt that I couldn't articulate a single word in English and was afraid to speak. My English vocabulary also improved." Maria, Seattle resident.

"What I wish to do is to express my great and many thanks for the Mobile Library. Without this service those of us without transport, and 'of age,' would be totally unable to access REAL books. In particular, I wish to express my extreme gratitude to the two librarians who have serviced my many book requests each month…Every month they arrive via the Mobile, with my many books, and their smiles and kindness, graciousness bring as much joy to me as do the books and CD music disks." - A lobby stop patron.

"Interview prep was very helpful. The interview questions were so helpful and the process of preparing all the answers with my adviser for the mock interviews was so valuable. I learned that there are multiple ways to put things in a positive way and the experience gave me a lot of opportunity to think about how I should present myself to potential employers." - Spring quarter English for Work student, in response to the question, "What are the most important or most helpful things you learned in English for Work?"

"This is my first time participating in these classes. I always wanted to improve my digital skills, but taking care of my young daughter was a challenge. Thank you so much for providing quality and culturally relevant childcare while I attended the classes." - Irma D.

"This was so important, we need MORE!"- an attendee at a Civic Engagement program on "Citizenship for All" in partnership with Nonggi.

By the Numbers:
- English Conversation Circles remain extremely popular. The Delridge Branch saw a noticeable increase in participation in an already popular program when it moved the program time from a weeknight to Saturday morning at the start of Q3. In a similar vein, the Northgate Branch increased its goal of 15 participants a week to 20 participants due to consistently high demand.
- 50 Seattle residents participated in Hopelink's English language programs in 2024 (33 in English for Work with 26 (79%) completing the program, plus an additional 17 in Beginner English).
- At the end of 2024, SPL was providing monthly visits or deliveries to 29 preschools, 72 adult facilities/buildings and 2 tiny house villages. The Library also provided services to 66 individuals through Books by Mail and made monthly deliveries to 30 home service patrons. SPL also brought the bookmobile to 11 special events this year, reaching over 2,000 people.
- While the number of business information appointments fell due to the ransomware attack, Library to Business hosted or participated in its most programs since 2021 and reached more than 2,000 participants.

Literacy & Early Learning

Granted: $699,346   Expended: $546,171

To succeed in life, all young people – from preschool through high school – need to be exposed to and engaged with a variety of high-quality learning experiences. As a leading learning institution, SPL provides these learning experiences as part of its commitment to serve youth and families. Foundation funded projects for 2024 included high profile programs such as the Global Reading Challenge and the Summer of Learning. After seeing increased learning gaps for non-English speakers and school aged children, the Library focused on putting staff in place to develop long term plans to address youth and teen programming. While hampered by logistical challenges, the youth programming staff remains dedicated to supporting children, teens, and families.

Service Priorities:

Community Engagement, Youth and Family Learning

Community Impact:

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

Why this matters:

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

The Seattle Public Library's traditional slate of outreach and programming for Literacy & Early Learning faced a challenge in 2024 due to the hiring freeze, staff reassignment, and the ransomware attack. This slow ramp up moved into high gear as the year progressed, staff returned to their roles, and access to technology was once again available.

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

Patron Experience:

"Dear Seattle Public Library, this library is one of my favorite libraries. It has all the book I could want and best of all, it has Homework Help. And I can't forget about Nancy. She is so amazing and the most sweetest librarian I ever met." - 8-year-old Homework Help student at Lake City

One parent was really excited to take home a rare copy of the Navajo comic Hero Twins for her son - "to see yourself in a comic book, that's amazing!" – Parent at a Books for Community Partners event at Magnolia.

"There is a grandpa who brings his 3 years old grandson to our KPL program. His son is 2nd generation in the US and speaks limited Chinese. Grandpa wants his grandson to explore more Chinese and make friends. Grandpa said I learn how to play with my grandson to support his growth and development after attended to our group. 'CISC staff are very helpful. they show me what my

grandson learns from jumping around and stacking blocks. My grandson talks more Chinese and is interested in our culture. My grandson will teach his parents what he learns from the group.'" - Connie Fung, Kaleidoscope Play & Learn (KPL) Coordinator- Chinese Information and Service Center

"I take great pride in being intentional about conducting the program entirely in Spanish. The value of what we model for families each week through our interactions is truly significant" - Spanish Storyteller, Xiomara Melgar about World Story Time

"I have been an Implementer since the program started years ago. Raising A Reader levels the field for the children who participate. Reading is free and all children should be able to experience the joy that books can bring to your life. I absolutely love this program" - Toddler Teacher, Launch @ Miller

"The collection has really evolved. I remember when I first started implementing this program [Raising a Reader], it was really limited to Spanish and English. I also like the new kits for social, emotional and STEM. It addresses a lot of curriculum requirements." - Pre-K Teacher, Chinese Information and Service Center

By the Numbers:
- Central's Young Adult Drop-in hosted 28 sessions for 218 attendees providing five hot meals a week in partnership with Teen Feed. Central also hosted an inaugural Young Adult Resource Fair over the summer with more than 500 attendees and meals distributed by the Rapid Relief Team.
- In the first return to branches since the pandemic, the Summer of Learning program hosted 43 programs onsite with more than 1,900 youth attending. For the first time, 100% of the teaching artists, presenters, and performers this year were Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
- The Library hosted four financial aid/scholarship support events at the Central Library, High Point, and Lake City branches reaching 58 teens and their families.
- 1,456 children ages 18 months to nine years participated in the Raising a Reader program.
- The Homework Help program saw a 39% increase in drop-in visits, offered 650 tutoring sessions, and reached 6,146 students at nine branch locations (Broadview, Columbia, Douglass-Truth, High Point, Lake City, NewHolly, Northgate, Rainier Beach, and South Park).
- More than 3,000 children, parents, and caregivers attended a Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Group in 2024.

Technology & Online Services

Granted: $493,125   Expended: $648,108
2024 Foundation funding supported Technology and Online Services, which provided SPL patrons with opportunities to learn and experience technology programs rooted in the principles of connected learning, design and computational thinking as well as Library technology upgrades. Programs funded through this priority area include Nourishing Minds and Arts for Community Voices. We include the external grants for programs like KidsTeam and IMLS Teen Mental Health in this category because of their use of technology.

Service Priorities:
Technology and Access, Community Engagement, Youth and Family Learning

Community Impact:

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

Why this matters:
Socio-economic disparities often limit access to technology that underrepresented populations have, including to quality programs supporting design and computational thinking skills. Through relationship building with youth, parents, caregivers, elderly care facilities, community partners, and disadvantaged community advocates, the Library is responding to the desire for people to be exposed to and gain technological skills, which are increasingly important in all aspects of the economy and society. To this end, the Library makes it a priority to provide access to current iterations of technological programs and devices and utilizes funding from this grant category to do so.

Research shows that teen mental health has been greatly impacted since the start of the pandemic. The Seattle Public Library's teen mental health program, which launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to bring attention to the critical importance of mental health during this challenging time. Through a variety of initiatives and partnerships, the Library was able to raise national awareness of the mental health concerns faced by individuals and communities during the pandemic. SPL's funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for this work for nearly $250,000 runs through 2025.

In 2024, with support from SPLF and IMLS, SPL continued building resources to support teen mental health. These programs included the Nourishing Minds project which developed resources like a cookbook, a quick guide, and a card deck to help staff assist teens. The KidsTeam program continued working with the University of Washington to co-design with teens and kids and explore how younger kids can learn about misinformation and disinformation.

The Art for Community Voices program, a partnership with the Seattle Housing Authority, is an original initiative aimed at engaging underrepresented youth from South Seattle and focuses on blending traditional digital art practices with community representation exploration.

In a challenging year for the IT team, the financial support for technology upgrades was imperative. The ransomware attack at the end of May forced numerous transitions to new software programs to occur at an extremely accelerated pace. The full shift to SharePoint as the Library's intranet system was planned to take place over many months; instead, this shift happened in a matter of weeks. Continued work on a complete transition to Microsoft 365 and SharePoint, bringing the remaining legacy items into the new environment, will occur in 2025.

Patron Experience:
Through these programs, the Library has created a pipeline of undergraduate students who start as interns and later on provide support as they become more capable with the design process and technical support. That is the case of Liam Salas, who is now the technical support for the interns. Liam is now contracted to work using funds from a digital media funded program to lead the project of creating a VR game in support of teen mental health. He has been an incredible asset as he manages the project and coordinate progress with the interns.

By the Numbers:
- Digital Media and Learning held 48 events across the Esports, Arts for Community Voices, and VR Mental Health programs.
- Six students participated in the yearlong VR Mental Health Program

Major Maintenance

Granted: $849,138   **Expended: $882,695**
The Library split this grant award between funds for interior upgrades to Library branch furniture, capital improvements at the Green Lake Branch, and the Northeast and Southwest HVAC upgrades. Interior upgrades centered on essential furniture, fixtures, shelving, and/or small equipment at library branches along with various Central Library purchases. Libraries receiving interior upgrades included West Seattle, Delridge, Capitol Hill, Highpoint, Beacon Hill, Northgate, Rainier Beach, Ballard, Greenwood, Broadview, and Green Lake. Additionally, funds from this category supported the interactive exploratory and sensory wall installed at the Northeast Branch.

The remaining funds for the HVAC upgrades to the Northeast and Southwest Branches were disbursed at the start of the year so these systems were fully functional during the warm summer months reducing the total number of non-air-conditioned SPL branches to five. Finally, the Green Lake Branch reopened after its seismic retrofit was completed in October. The Foundation generously provided financial support to fill some of the funding gaps that occurred due to inflationary increases in the project.

Service Priorities:
Re-Imagined Spaces in branches across the entire system.

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

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

Branch Restricted Donations

Granted: $23,125   **Expended: $19,939**
On occasion, the Foundation receives grant funds directed for extremely specific services and branch locations. Annually, the South Park branch receives a $10,00 program grant. Additionally, the Foundation funded the "Coffee & Conversations" program out of the Ballard Branch, the Highpoint 20th Anniversary event, and the sensory wall at Northeast.

Service Priorities:
Community Engagement

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

Why this matters:

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

At Ballard, the Coffee & Conversations program arose from a tragic event that gripped the neighborhood. In January 2023, a Ballard unhoused patron passed away on the plaza in front of the branch. In efforts to support the community and staff, who knew and cared about this person, the Library hosted an event bringing people together to mourn the individual and discuss societal challenges facing the city. This program has grown into one that allows staff to build a sense of community with patrons and develop trust and an emotional connection, leading to patrons feeling a deeper sense of membership and community.

By the Numbers:
- 20-35+ patrons attended weekly Coffee & Conversation events, including weekly movies.
- Around 1,300 people benefitted by attending Coffee & Conversations in person at the Ballard Branch.

Administrative Support

Granted: $287,136   **Expended: $360,287**
The majority of this grant covers Foundation related support activities such as a portion of the SPL liaison to the Foundation, and a portion of Administrative Services (Business Office and Finance) resources to manage Foundation grants and related expenses. The grant award in 2024 was for $84,135. The Chief Librarian's office used nearly all of the funds allotted for consideration costs as well funds for Service Priority Research and Learning.

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

Service Priorities:
Technology and Access, Seattle Culture and History, Community Engagement, Youth and FamilyLearning, Re-Imagined Spaces

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

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

Action Required/Requested: No action requested

![The Seattle Public Library logo]

The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 27, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Jan Oscherwitz, Library Levy Administrator
Elisa Murray, Communications Strategist

Re: **2024 Fourth Quarter and Annual Levy Report**

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

2024 Annual Levy Report
The 2019 Library Levy provided 36.4% of the Library's revised total 2024 budget of $138.4 million. The Library spent $31.7 million of the revised 2024 levy budget of $50.3 million (63%). Most of the levy budget underspend was related to multiyear projects in the Library's Capital Improvement Program and those funds carry over into 2025.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 2024, the Library continued to experience staffing and operational challenges, including a hiring freeze that was imposed in January to address citywide budget challenges and a cyberattack on Memorial Day weekend that had major impacts on our technology for several months. These challenges were unforeseeable when the levy was proposed in 2019, and while they 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

In Q1 2024, we significantly increased hours and service levels to access our resources in person, but we had to roll back those hours in Q2 after a city hiring freeze led to staffing shortages and unexpected closures. Between the beginning of April and the end of September, the Library was able to stabilize operations, and in late September, we increased open hours. When the remodeled Green Lake Branch reopened in late October, the Library was operating at 99% of our 2019 baseline and planning for an increase in hours in late January 2025 that would bring the Library above 2019 levels and closer to our levy promises.

Our Social Services team, created in 2022 and supported in part by levy funds, piloted new programs in 2024 to help our most vulnerable patrons meet basic needs and find community and connection. The team held three Resource Fairs and 35 Coffee and Conversations events and helped community members over 1,100 times, including referrals to lifeline services, as well as training and support for staff around the system.

Our security team conducted nearly 5,000 branch patrols in 2024, including both overnight and early morning patrols at high-incident branches to ensure our buildings were clean and safe before opening.

Collections: We promised a robust collection of books and materials

We continued to make significant investments in both digital and physical materials while responding to increased demand for digital books as costs for these materials continued to sharply rise. In 2024, the levy funded 47% of our collections budget. We added over 45,000 titles and nearly 100,000 copies to our e-book and e-audiobook collections and made changes in borrowing and purchasing practices that helped us manage high costs for e-books. We also added over 168,000 items to our physical collection, including 19,000 copies of Peak Picks, the no-holds, no wait collection that is 100% levy funded. Since that collection's launch in 2017, Peak Picks titles have been checked out over a million times.

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

In late May, we fell victim to a ransomware attack, which significantly disrupted Library systems and services. The incident forced us to take most technology-based services offline. The Library restored services throughout the summer and, by Labor Day, most systems and services were restored.

Our levy-funded hot spot program continues to provide internet access through our general collection and through targeted outreach with key community organizations, with nearly 5,700 loans of hot spots in 2024.

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

In 2024, we offered over 290 in-person weekly Play and Learn programs at seven different branches. Sessions were conducted in Amharic, Chinese, English, Somali, and Spanish.

We also offered over 1,000 story times at 23 branches, the Central Library and in the community. Our offerings included world language story times in Spanish and Arabic and a perennial patron favorite, Firefighter Story Time.

Maintenance: We promised to maintain buildings for the next generation

After a lengthy closure for a seismic retrofit and other renovations, the Library's historically landmarked Green Lake Branch reopened on Oct. 28, with the levy funding 65% of the project. The renovation preserved historic features of the Carnegie-era branch, while updating it with seismic reinforcement, electricity-powered HVAC system, and accessibility upgrades. Thanks to the 2019 levy and other funding sources, the Northeast and Southwest branches also received electric HVAC upgrades to provide air conditioning during summer months.

Despite operating with reduced staffing for most of the year, our facilities and janitorial/custodial teams completed nearly 6,000 work orders in 2024, including 1,750 in Q4 alone.

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

In November 2024, the Library Board adopted a 10-year strategic plan, informed by a levy-funded, multi-year process that engaged dozens of community organizations, hundreds of Library patrons, Library staff, and other invested parties. The plan seeks to help the Library build the community's sense of belonging and the organization's resiliency. It identifies steps the Library will take to address 21st century challenges and improve community outcomes. It also lays the groundwork for developing a 2026 Library Levy proposal. The Library began implementation of Stage 1 of the plan in January 2025.

Action required/requested: Board review and consideration of the 2024 Annual Levy Report for approval at the March 2025 Library Board meeting.

2024 Annual

The Seattle Public Library
LEVY REPORT

A year of new challenges and renewed resilience

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 accounted for $50.3 million (36.4%) of the Library's total revised budget of $138.4 million. The 2012 Levy provided $0.4 million (<0.3%). Other sources of funding include the City's general fund, state and federal grants, private funds, and Library fund balance. The Library spent $109.1 million (79% of its revised budget) in 2024, including $31.7 million of 2019 Levy funds and $130,000 of 2012 Levy funds. Most of the levy budget underspend was related to multiyear projects in the Library's Capital Improvement Program. Those funds carry over to 2025.
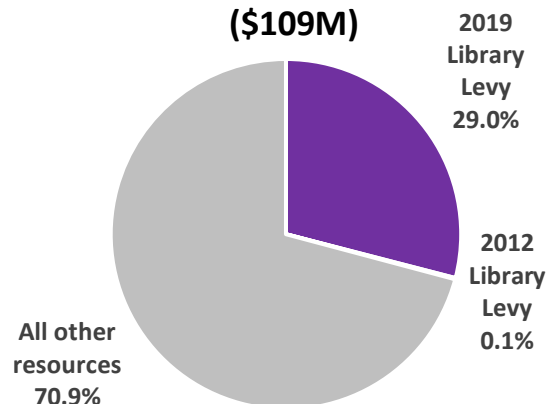
As part of its 2019 proposal to voters, the Library laid out a clear framework for how Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services that had been funded by the 2012 Levy and to provide additional services and programs over the seven-year levy period. This report, which covers levy activities and spending for 2024, with an emphasis on Q4, continues the series of quarterly levy updates the Library has provided for the Board of Trustees and the public since 2013.

Beyond renewing 2012 Levy commitments, the 2019 Levy provides support for additional Library hours; elimination of overdue fines; improved collections and technology; safe, clean, and well-maintained buildings; specialized programming and services for children; and development of a plan for the future of Library service. Levy funding supports a quarter of all positions at the Library, including 35% of children and teen service librarian positions.

2024 Library Revised Budget ($138.4M)

- 2019 Library Levy 36.4%
- 2012 Library Levy 0.3%
- All other resources 63.4%
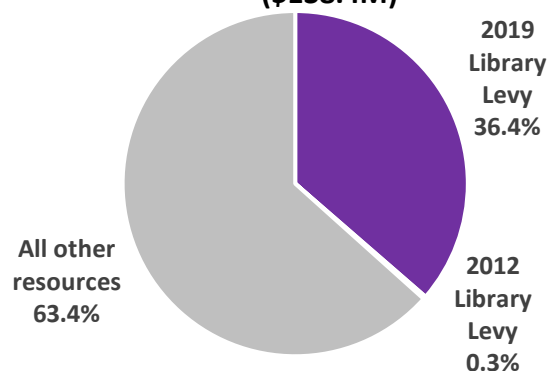
2024 Library Spending ($109M)

- 2019 Library Levy 29.0%
- 2012 Library Levy 0.1%
- All other resources 70.9%

2024 highlights

In 2024, the Library fulfilled many levy promises while responding to unanticipated challenges in keeping our facilities and online services safe and open. Most notably, in late May, we fell victim to a ransomware attack, which significantly disrupted Library systems and services. The incident forced us to take most technology-based services offline. The Library restored services throughout the summer and, by Labor Day, most systems and services were restored. Here are other highlights of 2024, which you will find detailed in this report.

Stabilizing open hours: In Q1 2024, the Library increased hours and service levels. In Q2, however, we had to roll back those hours due to a hiring freeze that created staffing shortages and unexpected closures. From April through September, the Library was able to stabilize staffing and operations. In late September, we increased open hours once again. When the remodeled Green Lake Branch reopened in late October, the Library was operating at 99% of our 2019 baseline. The Library also began planning for an increase in hours for late January 2025 that would bring the Library above 2019 levels and closer to our 2019 levy promises.

Renovation of the Green Lake Branch and HVAC upgrades:
After a lengthy closure for a seismic retrofit and other renovations, the Library's historically landmarked Green Lake Branch reopened on Oct. 28, with the levy funding 65% of the project. The renovation preserved historic features of the Carnegie-era branch, while updating it with seismic reinforcement, an electricity-powered HVAC system, and accessibility upgrades. Thanks to the 2019 levy and other funding sources, the Northeast and Southwest branches also received electric HVAC upgrades to provide air conditioning during summer months.

> "It's a great space for people to study or read or come together without having to buy anything ... It's the most democratic space we have."
>
> - Christine, a Green Lake patron

Investing in collections: In 2024, the levy funded 47% of our collections budget. We added over 45,000 titles and nearly 100,000 copies to our e-book and e-audiobook collections. We made changes that helped us manage high costs for e-books while responding to increasing patron interest in this format. We also added over 168,000 items to our physical collection, including 19,000 copies of Peak Picks, the no-holds, no wait collection that is 100% levy funded. Since that collection's launch in 2017, Peak Picks titles have been checked out over a million times.

Building community and connection. Our Social Services team, created in 2022 and supported in part by levy funds, piloted new programs in 2024 to help our most vulnerable patrons meet basic needs and find community and connection. The team held three resource fairs and 35 Coffee and Conversations events. The team helped community members over 1,100 times, including referrals to lifeline services, and provided training and support for Library staff throughout the system.

A new strategic plan: In November 2024, the Library Board adopted a 10-year strategic plan, informed by a levy-funded, multi-year process that engaged dozens of community organizations, hundreds of Library patrons, Library staff, and other invested parties. The plan seeks to help the Library build the community's sense of belonging and the organization's resiliency. It identifies steps the Library will take to address 21st century challenges and improve community outcomes. It also lays the groundwork for developing a 2026 Library Levy proposal. In December, we made the plan available on

our website and produced a video to help explain the plan to the public. In early 2025, we'll launch versions of the web page and video in Spanish, Chinese (both Simplified and Traditional), and Vietnamese. In the future, we will update the webpage to highlight progress we are making on the goals set out in the plan.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS & ACCESS

Stabilizing open hours and increasing access

The Hours and Access category of the 2019 Levy supports operating hours at our 27 libraries; community access to Library learning programs and services; and citywide community outreach and engagement. Many elements of this levy category relate to increasing access to Library resources. We achieve this through various efforts, such as eliminating late fees, adding open hours, and creating new access points like our holds pick up lockers. Total levy spending in 2024 for the Hours and Access category was $13.9 million.

A cyberattack disrupts library services

In late May, the Library experienced an event that disrupted much of our work during the summer months. Over Memorial Day weekend, our IT team discovered the Library was the target of a ransomware attack. We took most systems offline to contain the attack and collaborated with external cybersecurity experts, law enforcement, and city officials to plan a phased restoration and recovery process. During the restoration process, which completed after Labor Day, we kept staff and patrons informed with the help of alternative communication methods, such as print newsletters, our Shelf Talk blog, and our social media channels. We responded to many media requests – there have been over 80 news stories about the event to date.

> "Thank you so much for your hard work to get everything restored. I knew I loved the Library, but seeing how much I miss it really drives it home."
>
> - Library patron

Despite limited access to the technology that supports our operations, Library branches remained open, and staff provided solutions to maintain services, including manual checkouts, new offline programs, and support in finding alternative resources elsewhere in the community. We encouraged patrons to keep their materials until further notice, and extended patron due dates until we could reactivate our processing systems. Some resources, such as Kanopy, were restored almost immediately. Access to e-books and e-audiobooks through OverDrive/Libby was restored less than three weeks after the incident.

Community support was strong throughout our recovery, with patrons adapting to disruptions and expressing appreciation for the Library's efforts. The Library worked with digital forensics specialists to assess potential data impacts, notify affected individuals, and complete an after-

action review to evaluate the Library's response to the incident and improve future cybersecurity measures. Findings are expected to be publicly shared by the end of Q1 2025.

Challenges in keeping libraries open

The 2019 Library Levy promised expanded hours above 2019 levels. The Library took a first step toward expanded hours in January 2020 by adding an additional hour to each neighborhood branch library every Sunday. In March 2020, all libraries were ordered to be closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After several years of related challenges, the Library was able to restore open hours to pre-pandemic levels in early 2023. The Library was open more hours in that year than any year since 2009, and we were finally making progress on our levy promise of increasing hours.

But 2024 brought new challenges. We were open nearly 18,000 hours in Q1, 7% more than in 2019. This increased community access to Library collections, information services, computers, printers, programming, and public spaces. But by the end of Q1, we began to experience a high number of vacancies due to a hiring freeze. The Library's hiring freeze was implemented in tandem with a citywide hiring freeze to address 2025 budget challenges anticipated by the City.

By March 2024, staffing shortages led to unexpected closure days for some branches. In April, to stabilize hours, the Library reduced scheduled hours by 13% from the Q1 schedule and 7% from the 2019 baseline. In the summer, we implemented a schedule that minimized heat-related closures and stabilized operations to significantly reduce unexpected closure days.

As we worked to address potential 2025 budget challenges with the City of Seattle, we were able to begin hiring some additional staff. By late September, we implemented a new fall hours schedule that increased the number of open hours systemwide by 6% to 1,360 hours per week. When the Green Lake Branch reopened in Q4, the Library was operating at 99% of our 2019 hours. (See Appendix 1.)
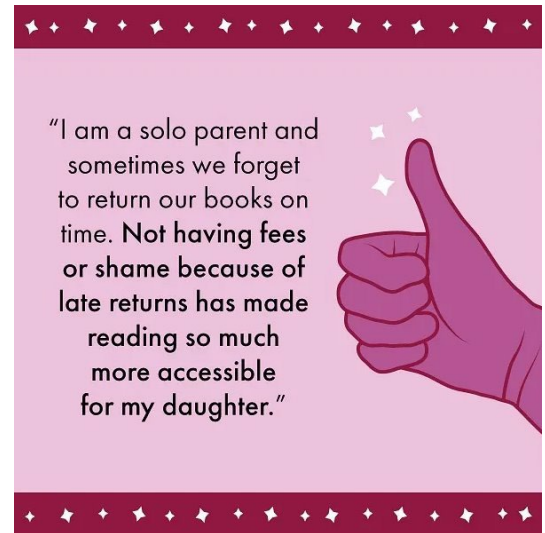
We also began planning for a significant increase in hours for late January 2025, including ensuring all library branches were open at least six days a week, and providing at least one weekend day at every location, which reflected patron preferences since the pandemic.

Five years of fine-free borrowing

The levy supports improving access to Library services for everyone, especially those who face barriers to using Library resources. Thanks to the levy, the Library eliminated late fines In January 2020, restoring Library access to 18,000 patrons who had their accounts previously suspended

due to fines. Since the change, contrary to what some expected, return rates have, on average, not changed. We have even seen a slight decrease in the number of items that are never returned.

Our patrons have shared many stories about the difference that fine-free borrowing has made for them. Parents appreciate that they can keep picture books for their kids a couple of extra days without financial repercussions; people who have trouble getting to the library during open hours worry less, too. One patron who is insecurely housed shared that "I can use the Library without worrying about what financial consequences might come with uncertain life situations."

"I am a solo parent and sometimes we forget to return our books on time. Not having fees or shame because of late returns has made reading so much more accessible for my daughter."

The Library has increased access in other ways over the last five years. Physical materials now renew automatically up to three times if no one else has placed a hold. For those facing financial hardship, the Library offers assistance with lost-item fees, including a one-time waiver for teens and young adults, funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation, and payment plans for others.

We offer 24/7 pickup lockers at seven locations so that holds are available even when we are closed. A new pick-up locker was added at the Ballard Branch in 2024 thanks to funds from the Washington State Department of Commerce. These lockers provide access to holds when branches are closed, helping us deliver on our levy promise of more materials when patrons want them.

Increasing safety

Keeping patrons and staff safe in our spaces is an important aspect of access. The Library experiences security incidents in and around our buildings, from Rules of Conduct violations to after-hours incidents outside our buildings. To respond to security challenges, the Library has added more security officers over the last five years. The levy now funds eight of the Library's 21 security positions, four more than were funded in the 2012 levy. This has helped the Library more effectively respond to safety issues and to better weather normal levels of staff turnover.

Our security team conducted nearly 5,000 branch patrols in 2024, including both overnight and early morning patrols at high-incident branches to ensure our buildings were clean and safe before opening. In 2025, the Library will conduct a security assessment to inform how best to upgrade security infrastructure, including possibly adding cameras at the Central Library and select branches that experience a high number of incidents. The Library is also working to modify how it deploys security officers to improve the responsiveness of our security operations.

In-person and virtual programs and services

In 2024, the Library offered over 4,500 programs, including 2,500 programs for children and youth, which provided education, connection, and inspiration to our young patrons and their caregivers. During the Library's ransomware recovery, our in-person programs continued to run without disruption. Attendance for all programs in 2024 was more than 105,000.

Early learning. The Library continued to expand early learning programs and has almost doubled our story time offerings since relaunching the program in April 2023. More than 1,000 story times were held in 2024 at Library locations and in the community, with attendance of over 36,000. We also held over 290 Play and Learn sessions, a levy-funded program described in more detail in the Children's Programming section of this report.

Homework Help: With the help of 189 adult volunteers, we offered 20 Homework Help sessions per week at nine branches during the school year. Ninety percent of Homework Help students reported their parents speak a language other than English at home, and most students served by the program are youth of color. We saw a total attendance of over 6,000 at 648 Homework Help sessions in 2024.

Tax Help: Last spring, the Library once again offered in-person Tax Help sessions in partnership with United Way of King County, AARP and PMI Savvy at the Central Library and 11 branch locations. Together, we offered 259 Tax Help sessions, and people filed over 4,000 tax returns at Library locations.

Summer of Learning: We celebrated our 105th annual Summer of Learning program with the theme "Free to Read," which encouraged children and families to explore the freedom of reading diverse stories and learning about new topics, people, and experiences. To complement the program, we created multilingual downloadable materials, available online or at local branches throughout the summer, including game boards and reading trackers. In 2024, we also held our first in-person Summer of Learning programs since 2019, including magic shows, jazz performances, and dance parties.

Seattle Reads and other cultural programs: With support from The Seattle Public Library Foundation, the Library hosted over 50 author events at the Central Library and other locations in 2024. From April to June, we offered more than 20 programs related to Seattle Reads, the Library's citywide book group, featuring "The Parable of the Sower" by Octavia Butler, a writer with local roots and global influence. The Library hosted many other community events, including a robust artist-in-residence program. We also held the first naturalization ceremony at the Central Library auditorium since 2019.

Meeting rooms: The Levy also helps support the use of community meeting spaces, which are free at our 26 neighborhood branches and available for a modest fee at the Central Library downtown. In 2024, meeting rooms were booked 10,000 times by Library staff, Library partners, community nonprofits, public agencies, elected officials, school groups, book clubs, and other community members.

"What do you love about your library?" Our 2024 Library Card Sign-up Month campaign, which began in September, coincided with the last services coming back online after the cyberattack, which inspired our theme, "Welcome Back to Your Library." We placed multiple ads around the city in multiple languages and engaged patrons with an interactive display in each branch, inviting patrons to write their answers to the question "What do you love about Your Library?" on sticky notes. We received more than 600 comments.
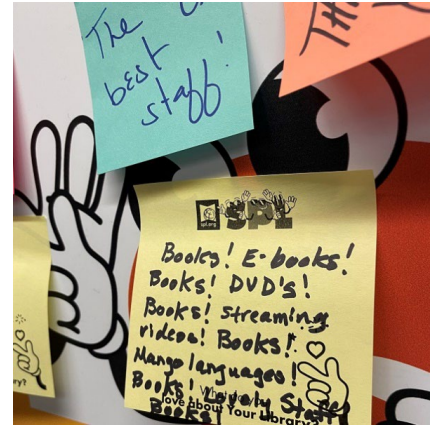
Building community and connection for vulnerable patrons

Our Social Services team includes a Social Services librarian, a senior community resource specialist, and a levy-funded community resource specialist who focuses on services for youth up to age 26. This team provides expertise to the Library on social service resources, coordinates with other providers, supports staff in de-escalation and trauma-informed practices, and assists patrons in need. The team meets regularly with Library staff throughout the system to share information and engage in problem solving.

In 2024, the team logged over 1,100 interactions with patrons and provided over 300 referrals for shelter. Other frequent questions related to housing stability, library resources, employment, transportation, and public benefits. The team also supported 43 patrons in acute crisis.

Much of the team's work focuses on building community and connection. In 2024, the team held 35 Coffee & Conversations events at the Central Library with attendance exceeding 1,500. They also supported weekly Young Adult Drop-Ins at the Central Library and launched a new weekly Crafternoon program, with 300 attendees in nine sessions. One participant said, "I look forward to this all week!"

The team also collaborated with colleagues to host three resource fairs, including the first-ever Young Adult Resource Fair at the Central Library and the first resource fair at the Lake City Branch. They offered eight harm reduction and overdose prevention events for the community.

Partnerships are essential to the team's work. In 2024, they supported Seattle Housing Authority housing voucher information and waitlist enrollment sessions; ORCA LIFT enrollment events; Community Health Access Program events; and vaccine clinics. Through the Seattle Department of Transportation's Transportation Access Program (TAP), the team distributed over 20,000 bus tickets in 2024, as well as over 1,000 pre-loaded ORCA cards. A new partnership between the NewHolly Branch and FareStart's Mobile Community Market brought farm-fresh food to communities without robust access and provided $25 produce vouchers.

FareStart Mobile Market at the NewHolly Branch

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: COLLECTIONS

Building robust collections in print and digital formats

The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintain and expand the Library's collection of physical and digital materials. The levy includes 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 funded $6.2 million, or 47% of our 2024 Collections spending, including $4.8 million for books and materials.

We added over 45,000 titles and nearly 100,000 copies to our e-book and e-audiobook collections in 2024, and over 168,000 items to our physical collection. Our digital and physical collections now contain 2.9 million items.

Due in part to cyberattack disruptions, total checkouts declined by about 19% from 13.4 million in 2023 to 10.8 million in 2024. E-materials — including e-books, e-audiobooks, streaming services, and digital Special Collections — accounted for 6.3 million (58%) of total checkouts.

Digital collections reaching more people

In recent years, the Library has increased our investment in our e-book and e-audiobook to meet patron interest. Since 2013, annual checkouts of e-books and e-audiobooks have grown from one million to 5.4 million in 2024. Just since 2019, the Library has nearly doubled the size of our digital book collection, to over a million items in 2024. In 2023, OverDrive reported that the Library was eighth in the world for digital book checkouts.
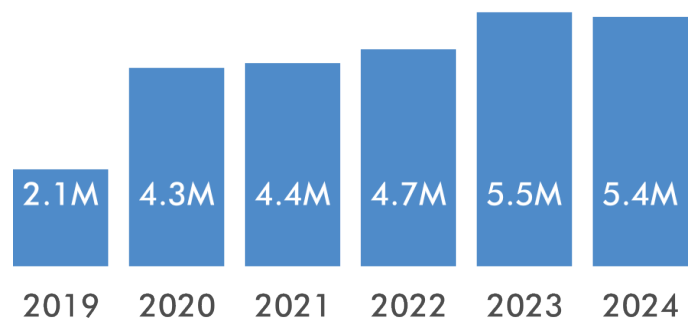
The Library is committed to providing materials in the format that best suits our patrons, but the cost of purchasing e-books has become increasingly unsustainable. While consumers pay the same or less for a digital version of a book, libraries are charged three to five times more. Moreover, each copy of a digital book title requires a purchase of a license, and the most common license needs to be purchased and then repurchased every year.

In March 2024, to help manage costs for digital books and ensure a broad and diverse collection all year, the Library reduced the number of maximum holds on digital books from 25 to 10. Patron holds are the single biggest factor in rising costs, because the Library buys additional licenses of a digital title when patrons place more holds on it.

Understanding 2024 trends is complicated by the cyberattack, which took e-books offline for almost three weeks and paused our ability to purchase new digital copies for two months. The Library spent $2.4 million in 2024 to fulfill holds placed on popular titles, which represented about 50% of total OverDrive spending, a decline compared to 2023, when the Library spent almost $3 million on high-demand titles, or 62% of our OverDrive spending.

Count of e-book checkouts

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
2.1M	4.3M	4.4M	4.7M	5.5M	5.4M

The number of Library patrons checking out e-books and e-audiobooks increased by 8% in 2024, from 175,000 to over 188,500, while the number of digital book checkouts declined slightly from 5.5 million to 5.4 million. Cardholders through our privately funded Books Unbanned program, teens and young adults from every state in the country who can access our digital book collection for free, represented 8,255 of these borrowers and 249,000 of these checkouts.

Count of patrons who checked out e-books

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
110K	138K	138K	151K	175K	189K
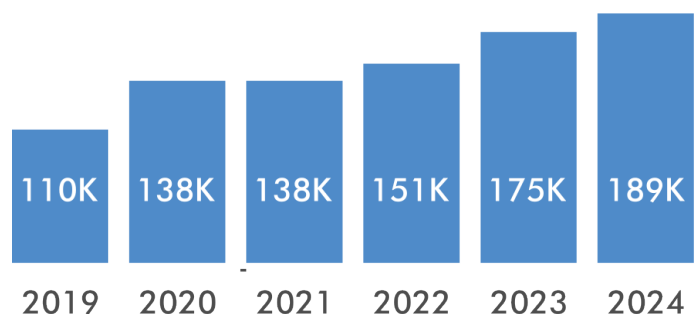
In 2024, we also used levy funds to expand our digital World Language Collection. We acquired 1,450 copies of e-books and e-audiobooks for adults and more than 650 copies for children in 11 languages. In Q4 alone, we added 661 titles for adults, 192 titles for teens, and 181 titles for children. We also expanded the Library's digital language learning collection, adding more than 450 titles and nearly 950 copies covering 38 languages. We also added 170 titles and over 300 copies of digital books for patrons learning or practicing the English language.

Building physical collections and increasing language offerings

Patrons checked out more than 1.3 million physical items in Q4 and 4.5 million physical items throughout the year. Nearly 120,000 people checked out physical Library materials in 2024, compared to about 124,000 in 2023. We added over 168,000 physical items to our collection using funds from all sources. Peak Picks, the Library's popular no-holds, no-wait collection of high-interest titles is funded by the levy and is our most popular physical collection. In 2024, we added 114 Peak Picks titles and over 19,000 copies, including 29 new titles and 4,800 copies in Q4 alone. Q4 highlights included Louise Erdrich's "The Mighty Red," the quarter's most popular Peak Pick, and Samantha Harvey's 2024 Booker Prize winning novel, "Orbital."

Top 10 Peak Picks for 2024

1. "The Kamogawa Food Detectives," by Hisashi Kashiwai
2. "James," by Percival Everett
3. "The Paris Novel" Elisha Ferry's autographed 1889 Inaugural Address.
4. "Wandering Star"
5. "Slow Productivity," by Cal Newport
6. "Supercommunicators," by Charles Duhigg
7. "The Backyard Bird Chronicles," Amy Tan
8. "Rental Person Who Does Nothing," by Shoji Morimoto
9. "Come and Get It," by Kiley Rieid

Annual checkouts for Peak Picks were 112,000 in 2024, a decline from 2023 due to the cyberattack. But the collection reached an important milestone in the spring when it surpassed one million total checkouts since its launch in 2017.

We increased language access in our physical collection, adding over 4,000 titles and 13,000 copies in 15 languages. We also expanded Spanish language books to all branches. This work, in part, is responsive to a levy-funded collection diversity audit we conducted in 2022 and 2023.

Expanding our local history collections and making them more accessible

The Seattle Room, located at the Central Library, provides in-person access to treasured local history items, while our digital Seattle Room collections make Seattle history easier to access for students, researchers, historians, and others. The Seattle Room curator and Special Collections digital librarian positions are both funded by the levy, and the levy pays for acquisitions.

In 2024, the Library acquired more than 1,000 physical items for the Seattle Room collection, including local manuscripts, menus, photos, postcards, books, and more. Notable additions included two rare
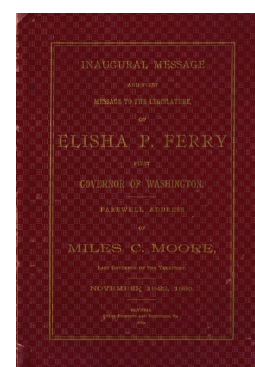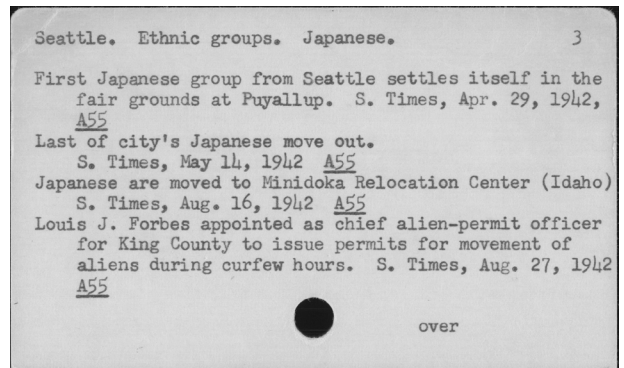
Cover of Elisha Ferry's autographed 1889 Inaugural Address

1950s copies of Bamboo, a short-lived magazine about Filipino life in Seattle; official 19th century reports on local Native American tribes by U.S. Indian agents; and a signed copy of the 1889 inaugural address of Washington State's first governor, Elisha Ferry.

Special Collections staff also hosted 450 research appointments for patrons accessing collections and resources in the Seattle Room. We added 3,800 digitized local history items to our digital special collections, for a total of over 30,000 digital items. The Special Collections team added digital archives of the Northwest Asian Weekly, which covered news impacting the region's Asian American community between 1983 and 2023, and 1,500 issues of Marine Digest, an important source of maritime news that started in 1922. We also introduced first scans from the impressive Paul Dorpat Collection and made progress on digitizing "Ethnic Groups" cards from our Northwest Subject Index, which provide citations to publications documenting news related to Seattle's diverse communities. This work helps preserve local history for all communities who have called Seattle home.

"Ethnic Groups" card scanned from Northwest Subject Index

Nearly 40,000 unique users visited our digital Special Collections over 53,500 times, accumulating 377,000 pageviews, in 2024.

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. The levy funded $3 million of operating expenses related to technology and online services in 2024 and $764,000 of technology capital spending.

Digital equity and the HotSpot circulation program

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

The Library's 850 Wi-Fi hot spots, among the most popular items in our collection, were checked out over 5,400 times in 2024. In Q4 2024, we began to upgrade our hot spots to a new 5G model, which will provide faster and more stable access to our patrons.

With our outreach hot spot program, we continued our work with partners to open pathways to opportunities with communities in our city. Through 14 partnerships, the Outreach HotSpot Team checked out 285 hot spots to people disproportionately impacted by the digital divide in alignment with data highlighted by the City of Seattle's Technology and Access Study. Equipped with a community of support, Library-provided internet access, and relevant information and resources, participants took action to move toward their personal and collective goals.

Isabel, a Villa Comunitaria student, was able to take a Library hot spot home in the course of the computer class to practice new skills.

In 2024, we shifted to lending periods that varied based on the duration of a program. For example, Spanish-language students learning computer skills through Villa Comunitaria classes held at the Delridge Branch borrowed Library hot spots for the three-month duration of the program. Tiny House Villages and shelters had one-year checkout periods to ensure that residents had ongoing access to Library resources.

Library staff across the city engaged in outreach activities throughout the year with hot spot program partners. They visited digital skills classes, shelters and partner events; built relationships; and helped people access their library in ways that were most relevant to them. As the Library navigated the impacts of the ransomware event, outreach staff shared updates with patrons regarding available Library services, and alternative low-cost access to the internet.

Over the year, participants and partners shared success stories highlighting what they were able to do with the support of the outreach hot spot program, including participating in ESOL, citizenship, job readiness and GED classes online; getting one-on-one tutoring; accessing E-books; contacting family; paying bills; checking in with case managers; accessing news online; and looking for work.

Maintaining access to technology and improving cybersecurity

Patron access to technology services in 2024 was significantly disrupted by the ransomware attack from late May through Labor Day. But even with that disruption, we facilitated 240,000 public computing sessions and patrons printed 1.5 million pages using Library technology, slightly less than in 2023 (1.7 million pages).

Usage of ScanEZ stations, which offer free faxing and scanning as well as translation at all locations, grew by almost 15% from 2023 to 2024, from 263,000 to 308,000 pages.

In the wake of the ransomware attack, the Library accelerated a number of efforts to improve our cybersecurity, including moving systems to the cloud and implementing multifactor authentication systemwide. We also began the process of hiring a new cybersecurity analyst to lead the development of a more mature cybersecurity program at the Library.

We made significant progress on a levy-funded project to develop a new Library app that will make it easier for our patrons to manage their accounts and find out about Library programs and events. The app is expected to launch publicly in early- to mid-2025.

The 2019 Levy includes $4 million to support the replacement of the existing Integrated Library System (ILS), which helps libraries manage book catalogs, checkouts, patron accounts, and other services in one centralized system. The work is expected to begin in early 2025.

We continued to upgrade and shift our technology offerings to serve changing community needs. We replaced 258 public PCs in 2024, upgraded and deployed new and improved credit card readers for printing, finished the final upgrade of network switches for the Central Library, and finished the final upgrade of core networking equipment.

Expanding early learning options for children

The 2019 Levy promised additional support for Library early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5, providing about $420,000 to support this effort in 2024.

A key element of our early learning programs supported by the levy is the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program. This program provides drop-in neighborhood-based play groups for the Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregiver (FFN) community. Early childhood educators and trained community members facilitate weekly 90-minute sessions for children between the ages of birth to 5. Parents, caregivers, and children are guided through a variety of developmental activities, including open-ended play, circle time, and sharing. The Library provides meeting room space, access to group supplies, and financial support to local community-based groups who facilitate these sessions.

We currently offer seven weekly Play and Learn programs at the Beacon Hill, Columbia, Delridge, Lake City, NewHolly, Rainier Beach, and South Park branches, exceeding our levy commitment to fund up to six weekly sessions at branch locations. In 2024, over 290 levy-funded Play and Learn sessions were held at these branches, with attendance of over 7,600. Most programs operate year-round, except for the groups at the Delridge and South Park branches, which follow the Seattle Public Schools calendar. Most programs were bilingual or were offered in a language other than English, including Amharic, Chinese, Somali or Spanish.

Each year, BrightSpark, the umbrella organization that administers the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program, evaluates survey responses from program participants from all Play and Learn programs in King County. In 2024, more than 82% of respondents reported an increased understanding that play helps children develop school readiness skills and 92% reported that they feel more supported as a parent or caregiver in their community. 85% reported they were having more discussions with their children about numbers, shapes, and sizes.

Play and Learn facilitator. Photo courtesy of Denise Louie Education Center

Program Locations and Languages

Play and Learn Languages
- Amharic
- Chinese
- English
- Somali
- Spanish
- bilingual
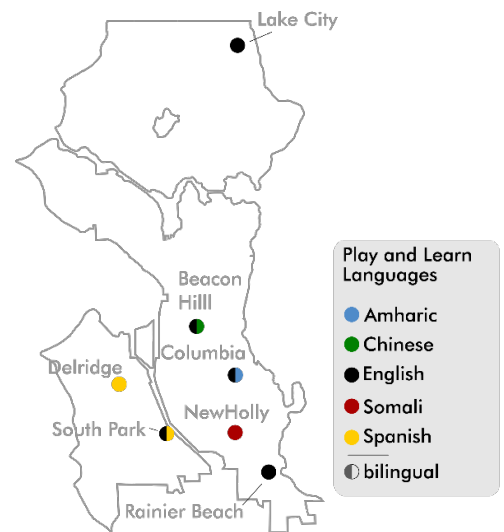
In the survey, caregivers also shared comments about the benefits of Play and Learn. One respondent wrote that their child, who had a speech delay due to apraxia, improved her everyday speech and confidence "more than I could ever imagine this year and a lot of it seems to have stemmed from her having time with her peers through Play and Learn."

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 2024 revised levy budget included $2.3 million for routine maintenance and $17.2 million for major maintenance and seismic retrofits from the 2019 levy. An additional $250,000 from the 2012 levy was also available to support major maintenance. In 2024, the Library spent $1.7 million on routine maintenance and $5.25 million on major maintenance and seismic work. The Library spent $130,000 of the 2012 levy funds.

Routine maintenance: Keeping our facilities and grounds clean and safe

Keeping Library facilities clean, safe, and accessible are important levy priorities. The Library's janitorial/custodial and facilities teams were busy in 2024 responding to work order requests across our 27 locations.

Despite remaining understaffed, the janitorial/custodial team responded to over 1,800 work order requests, with 550 in Q4, mostly related to restroom cleaning and maintenance, including the removal of biological hazards and fixing clogged toilets and sinks.

The facilities team completed nearly 4,100 work order requests in 2024 (1,200 in Q4), including graffiti removal, cleaning roofs and gutters, fixing fences, repairing carpeting and furniture, cleaning up after events, replacing lighting, and much more.

The team also responded to 5,000 work orders for scheduled preventative maintenance, with approximately 1,250 of those work orders coming in Q4. These work orders reflect a wide range of routine but important maintenance, from pressure washing branch grounds to scheduling inspections of critical fire and life-safety systems and overseeing needed repairs.

Our facilities team maintains Library grounds such as this Fremont Branch landscape. Photo by Matthew Roland.

Multiple repairs were performed on the Ballard Branch garage door due to damage from cars running into the gate. Glass along the north side of the Central Library, which was damaged due to vandalism, was replaced.

Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

The year's most significant capital improvement was the completion of the Green Lake Branch renovation project. After an 18-month closure for a seismic retrofit and significant renovations, the branch reopened on October 28 with a [press conference and public celebration](#) that drew city leaders and patrons to visit and tour the remodeled spaces.

The renovations updated the historically landmarked branch while preserving its historic features. Updates included a seismic retrofit to keep patrons safe during an earthquake; an electric HVAC system to reduce carbon emissions and provide air conditioning; a new elevator and exterior ramp to increase accessibility; new and improved restrooms; meeting rooms and other interior changes to provide more usable space for patrons. It is expected to reduce carbon output by an estimated 20-30 metric tons each year.

Patrons enjoy the newly remodeled Green Lake Branch.

The Library Levy funded 65% of the Green Lake Branch renovation, while the Real Estate Excise Tax and Payroll Expense Tax revenue (18%) and a Washington State commerce grant (18%) provided the rest.

The University Branch is now closed through 2026 for similar upgrades. Construction will begin March 3, 2025. The Columbia Branch is also slated for the same improvements, and we are still working to determine construction dates.

The Library continues to make progress on adding modern HVAC systems to all locations, reflecting our commitment to providing patrons and the community with refuge from heat and wildfire smoke, preventing heat-related schedule disruptions and closures, and reducing our carbon footprint. Thanks to the levy and other funding sources, two additional branches – the Northeast and Southwest branches -- offered air conditioning to patrons during the summer of 2024. The Northeast Branch HVAC project completed in early 2024, and the Southwest Branch in 2023.

The Library continued the final stages of an HVAC/electrification project at the Capitol Hill Branch, which began in 2023 and should be completed in Q1 2025.

Partial funding for the remaining HVAC/electrification projects at the Columbia, Fremont, Queen Anne, University, and West Seattle is included in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant (awarded in mid-2024), for which the Library had applied in 2022. The $5.2 million FEMA grant will not cover the entire cost of each project, so timing of these projects will depend upon supplemental funding decisions. Additionally, there is a possibility that the FEMA grant may be affected by federal funding changes that began in early 2025.

The Library continues to pursue additional federal and state funding opportunities to supplement levy funding for these projects. But applying for, monitoring, and reporting on federal and state funding requires significant staff time and resources, and often very specific technical expertise, which can be beyond current Library staff capacity. Timeliness of funding decisions varies and is dependent upon political factors beyond the Library's control.

Failure to secure adequate federal and state grants may result in insufficient resources for the seismic retrofit of the Columbia Branch. Much will depend on the project's ultimate scope and cost estimate.

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead:

As you'll read in our 2025 first quarter report, our staff continue to adapt, enhance, and launch services and programs. Here's a quick preview:

- Implementing the Library's new 10-year Strategic Plan
- Expanding open hours
- Beginning construction on the University Branch seismic project
- Managing e-book and e-audiobook demand
- Launching a new Library app
- Integrated Library System development

2024 Financials

The 2019 Levy accounts for $50.3 million (36.4%) of the Library's total revised 2024 budget of $138.4 million. The Library spent $31.7 million in funds from the 2019 Levy and $0.1 million in funds from the 2012 Levy. The Library spent 63% of the revised budget from the 2019 Levy and 9% from the 2012 Levy. Underspending was largely due to delays in implementing the major maintenance and technology capital programs.

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. The revised 2024 budget also includes a $1.5 million supplemental increase associated with wage adjustments per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (2023 retroactive 5% wage increase; 2024 4.5% wage increase).

2019 Levy	Operations Plan	2024 Revised Budget	2024 Expenditures	Available	% Spent
Hours & Access	13,692,000	14,951,420	13,948,924	1,002,497	93%
Collections	5,931,000	5,919,469	6,163,933	(244,464)	104%
Technology & Online Services	2,670,000	2,666,135	2,969,964	(303,830)	111%
Children's Programming	381,000	420,309	420,250	59	100%
Routine Maintenance	1,947,000	2,285,171	1,673,883	611,287	73%
Administration	573,000	582,731	471,931	110,801	81%
Major Maintenance & Technology CIP	5,859,000	23,520,884	6,023,200	17,497,685	26%
Total	**31,053,000**	**50,346,120**	**31,672,084**	**18,674,035**	**63%**

2012 Levy	Revised Budget	2024 Expenditures	Available	% Spent
Technology & Online Services	98,932	98,932	-	100%
Routine Maintenance	9,250	9,250	-	100%
Major Maintenance CIP	254,878	21,917	232,961	9%
Total	**363,060**	**130,099**	**232,961**	**36%**

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

Location	2019	Jan 1 - Mar 4	Mar 5 - Apr 11	Apr 12 - Jun 18	Jun 19 - Sep 24*	Sep 25 - Dec 31
Ballard Branch	60	62	62	62	62	62
Beacon Hill Branch	60	56	56	52	56	56
Broadview Branch	60	62	62	54	54	54
Capitol Hill Branch	60	62	62	52	60	60
Central Library	62	62	62	62	62	62
Columbia Branch	60	56	56	48	48	56
Delridge Branch	39	56	56	56	48	48
Douglass-Truth Branch	60	62	62	54	62	60
Fremont Branch	39	48	48	40	40	40
Green Lake Branch*	39	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	48
Greenwood Branch	60	62	62	62	62	62
High Point Branch	46	62	62	54	58	56
International District/Chinatown Branch	46	62	62	54	46	48
Lake City Branch	60	62	62	54	54	62
Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch	39	48	48	32	32	40
Magnolia Branch	39	48	48	40	40	40
Montlake Branch	39	48	48	32	37	40
NewHolly Branch	39	56	56	48	40	48
Northeast Branch	60	CLOSED	56	48	48	48
Northgate Branch	60	60	56	48	40	48
Queen Anne Branch	39	48	48	40	40	40
Rainier Beach Branch	60	56	56	52	56	56
South Park Branch	46	62	62	54	62	58
Southwest Branch	60	56	56	48	48	48
University Branch	46	48	48	48	40	40
Wallingford Branch	39	56	56	40	40	40
West Seattle Branch	60	56	56	48	48	48
Total Weekly Hours	1377	1416	1468	1282	1283	1368
% of 2019 baseline		**103%**	**107%**	**93%**	**93%**	**99%**

* Green Lake opened Oct. 28, 2024

The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 27, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services
Charles Wesley, Library Technology Officer

Re: **After Action Review (AAR) report following May 2024 Ransomware Attack**

Background
Following the May 2025 ransomware attack and the substantial restoration of library services and technology in September, the Library collaborated with City of Seattle Information Technology department (SEA-IT) to engage an outside consultant to perform a comprehensive assessment of the event. The Library and SEA-IT selected Cybertrust America to review the cybersecurity incident and response and produce a report. The review was conducted under the direction of the Library's legal counsel, Orrick, and by the City Attorney's Office.

Update
Cybertrust America completed their assessment in February and submitted their final report to the Library and SEA-IT. The report is attached and provided to the Board as information only. No action is required.

Action required/requested:
-Informational only, no action requested at this time. Comments welcome.

Report for The Seattle Public Library
After-Action Review (AAR)

Adaptable Security Corp

(Doing Business As Cybertrust America)

March 2025

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an After-Action Review (AAR) conducted by Cybertrust America ("Cybertrust") to comprehensively assess The Seattle Public Library's (the "Library" or "SPL") response to a ransomware attack discovered on May 25, 2024. (the "Incident").

As an independent nonprofit coalition, Cybertrust was selected from a pool of qualified consulting firms to conduct the AAR. Cybertrust's deep-rooted experience in local government partnerships and proven cybersecurity methodologies enabled the team to assess the incident response, provide expert insights, and recommend practical, collaborative, and cost-effective improvements.

Cybertrust coordinated with SPL's executives, SPL Information Technology ("SPL IT"), the City of Seattle's Information Technology ("City IT"), Seattle City Attorney's Office ("City Attorney"), Seattle City's outside legal counsel ("Legal Counsel") and SPL's incident response vendors, to develop this AAR Report.

The AAR reviewed the entire Incident lifecycle, from initial detection to final recovery. This included initial detection, response initiation, containment, and stakeholder communication. The response showcased many strengths, including but not limited to, rapid activation of the Incident Response Plan, decisive leadership, effective collaboration with internal and external partners, and timely communication with stakeholders.

The AAR also identified opportunities to strengthen SPL's incident response. A pragmatic roadmap is developed to capitalize these opportunities, including:

- **Risk-based Management:** Expanding the use of a risk-based approach will maximize the impact of investments by prioritizing risks and focusing efforts on the most critical areas.

- **Dedicated Cybersecurity Leadership:** Centralized leadership, with a designated cybersecurity leader and team, could improve accountability and foster a stronger cybersecurity posture as compared to a decentralized approach.

- **Cybersecurity Culture with Partners:** By leveraging SPL's strong collaborations and partnerships with City of Seattle's departments, such as City IT, the City Attorney's Office, and the Mayor's Office, SPL can foster a stronger cybersecurity culture. This can be achieved through formal agreements like Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs), which can unlock valuable resources, expertise, talent, and grant opportunities.

The Seattle Public Library leadership restated its commitment to bolster its cyber defenses and enhance its protection of its 10 million annual patrons, its dedicated workforce, as well as its invaluable 2.9 million items in its collection, ensuring the continued fulfillment of its

mission "to bring people and ideas together to enrich lives."

II. The Cyber Incident and Response

In the early hours of Saturday, May 25, 2024 of Memorial Day weekend, SPL discovered a ransomware attack and took proactive actions to disrupt the threat actors' advances. The actions included suspending services in its central downtown location, 26 neighborhood branches and two data centers. Buildings remained open at the Library's 27 locations across Seattle, with print books and other physical materials available for checkout via paper forms while access to staff and public computers, online catalog and loaning systems, e-books and e-audiobooks, in-building Wi-Fi, and the Library website were affected.

Swift actions led to the restoration of key services thanks to the Library's Incident Response Team, consisting of Library personnel, outside legal counsel, and forensics experts. By May 26 all online machines and servers had security software enabled, and laptops paired with wifi hotspots were available for Library staff to deliver library services. External communications was established on May 28 via the ShelfTalk blog. The external Domain Name System (DNS) was restored on June 4, enabling the www.spl.org public web site to resume online services. All e-materials including e-books and e-audiobooks were restored by June 13, 2024. The Library's services were fully restored by September 4th. This recovery time of 72 business days ranks in the top 5% for performance, according to the IBM Ponemon Institute's "Cost of a Data Breach Report 2024."

With the assistance of outside experts, the Library undertook an extensive investigation to better understand what occurred during the attack and what data may have been affected. The investigation determined that while it is challenging to pinpoint the threat actor's unauthorized initial entry into SPL's systems, the activities were consistent with the compromise of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) appliance. The threat actors used this initial foothold to expand their attack, and beginning on May 24, 2024, the threat actors downloaded SPL data and deployed ransomware on SPL systems. Impact to the Library patrons' data was minimized thanks to the Library's policy of storing minimal patrons' personally identifiable information.

With the assistance of outside experts, the Library undertook a complex and labor-intensive process to identify personal data contained in those files and locate up-to-date contact information for impacted individuals. While this process was underway, the Library took the proactive step of offering credit monitoring services to all employees and setting up call center support. Following the completion of its analysis of the impacted data, SPL promptly gave formal notice to all identified individuals as appropriate beginning on December 12, 2024. The notices included an offer for two years of free credit and identity monitoring services. This AAR applies the latest NIST Cybersecurity Framework 2.0 and the Incident

Response Recommendations and Considerations for Cybersecurity Risk Management, and summarized the following:

Areas of Success:

- **Clear Leadership and Strong Teamwork**: The responsive leadership and collaborative spirit allowed the Library to respond to the Incident swiftly and effectively.

- **Rapid Response and Collaboration**: The Incident Response Plan (IRP) was properly activated and followed once the Seattle Public Library IT lead received the notification of the Incident.

- **Leveraging External Expertise**: Third-party consultants provided critical expertise and resources to accelerate the recovery process.

- **Flexible and Adaptive Approach**: The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and to make timely decisions was crucial, e.g., necessary actions were taken swiftly despite the attack taking place on a holiday weekend and that some leaders were on scheduled vacation.

Lessons Learned:

1. Consider standing up a Security Operations Center (SOC) function with clearly defined service agreements and performance metrics.
2. Enhance Incident Response Planning by:
   - Strengthening the communication protocols by establishing out of band communication and logging systems
   - Identifying and tracking incident response performance metrics such as Mean Time to Recover (MTTR)
   - Conducting annual tabletop exercises to practice deploying the Incident Response Plan (IRP) and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

III. Recommendations

It is imperative that the Library continue to safeguard its services and protect all Library and employee data including patrons and employees' data from cybersecurity risks in alignment with SPL's mission and guiding principles: "Protect confidentiality of patron records", "Form strong partnerships," and "Adapt and innovate."

A. Three Opportunities to Enable SPL's Mission

The AAR has identified three opportunities that the Library can leverage to improve its cybersecurity maturity in a cost-effective way over time. Figure 1 below illustrates these opportunities.

Figure 1 Recommendations: A Culture of Security Enables SPL's Available and Trusted Services

We recommend that the Library develop a pragmatic roadmap which considers both asset criticality and cybersecurity risks in an effort to capitalize on these three opportunities and submit that developing such a roadmap would assist the Library in realizing its desired cybersecurity maturity on schedule. We propose that the first step the Library takes when designing such a roadmap is to conduct a rigorous risk assessment.

Strengthening the Library's cybersecurity leadership could leverage the NICE Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity (NICE Framework) to staff the Library with qualified personnel.

B. Success Measurements

You can't manage what you don't measure. To effectively enhance SPL's cybersecurity posture and culture, we recommend tracking key metrics, such as:

1. Cybersecurity Posture   This metric is highly confidential on a need-to-know basis, enabling the cybersecurity leader and team's planning and accountable execution.

2. Transparency   Stakeholders understanding SPL's cybersecurity strategy, knowledge, and commitment cultivates a sense of ownership and responsibility, fostering a robust security culture.

3. Stakeholder Confidence   Stakeholders' level of confidence in SPL's ability to protect its assets and personnel can guide the Library's cybersecurity strategy and plans.

By tracking these metrics annually or semi-annually, the Team can identify trends, measure progress, and make data-driven decisions to accomplish its cybersecurity program goals.

C. AAR Report Verification

The Library has taken steps to address some of the recommendations contained in this AAR. For example, the Library has been establishing a dedicated cybersecurity leadership and has filled the position of a dedicated cybersecurity analyst. A Security Operations Center (SOC) has been acquired to provide more robust monitoring to ensure SPL's availability.

To maximize the value derived from this After-Action Review (AAR), Cybertrust recommends an AAR Report verification within six months no later than August 1, 2025. This verification will evaluate the progress made in implementing the recommendations in this report. A concise verification report will be appended to this document to capture the findings and any necessary adjustments to the original recommendations.

IV. Conclusion

This AAR concludes that the Library managed the incident response effort effectively and as a result, lessened the impact of the ransomware attack. This outcome is attributed to strong leadership, effective execution of the incident response plan, and strong partnerships that enabled a service restoration timeline which outperformed the global average for data breaches.

The AAR has yielded valuable insights and actionable recommendations for further enhancing the Library's incident response planning. By implementing these recommendations, the Library can continue to strengthen its incident response processes and documentation to ensure even greater efficiency and resilience.

Furthermore, the AAR report outlines a risk-based management methodology and proposes a pragmatic roadmap for achieving a robust cybersecurity posture. Successful implementation of this roadmap will significantly enhance the Library's cyber defense, improving its availability, safety, and overall ability to fulfill its mission for all stakeholders.

Cybertrust is honored to have contributed to this AAR effort and remains committed to supporting SPL and City of Seattle's cybersecurity initiatives as needed.

Appendices

Appendix A Abbreviations

AAR
An after-action review (AAR) is a technique for improving process and execution by analyzing the intended outcome and actual outcome of an action and identifying practices to sustain, and practices to improve or initiate, and then practicing those changes at the next iteration of the action.

NIST CSF
National Institute of Standards and Technology. It is an agency under the Department of Commerce. CSF refers to the Cybersecurity Framework, which includes 153 controls with 26 new controls in the new pillar "Govern". https://www.nist.gov/cyberframework

NICE
The NICE Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity (NIST Special Publication 800-181, revision 1) provides a set of building blocks for describing the Tasks, Knowledge, and Skills (TKS) that are needed to perform cybersecurity work by individuals or teams. Through these building blocks, the NICE Framework enables organizations to develop their cybersecurity workforces and helps learners explore cybersecurity work and engage in learning activities to develop their capabilities. https://niccs.cisa.gov/workforce-development/nice-framework

MTTR
Mean time to recovery /respond /resolve /repair (MTTR) is the average amount of time it takes to repair or recover from an issue or failure in a system, equipment or process.

COOP
Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

SOP
Standard Operating Procedures

Appendix B References

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Disclaimer

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP ("Counsel") engaged Cybertrust America's services on behalf of Counsel's client, The Seattle Public Library, in connection with a privileged investigation. Cybertrust America's services were performed at the direction of Counsel to assist Counsel in providing legal advice to The Seattle Public Library in response to a computer security incident. Cybertrust America is providing no opinion, attestation or other form of assurance and disclaims any contractual or other responsibility to others based on their access to or use of the Deliverable. Accordingly, the information in this Deliverable may not be relied upon by anyone other than Counsel and Seattle Public Library.

The scope of Cybertrust America's work was confined to reviewing the available documents and forensic evidence provided to us, along with interviewing selected relevant Seattle Public Library employees and vendors pertinent to the review. Although Cybertrust America has taken reasonable measures to verify the accuracy of the information given, we have not independently validated all the information.

Throughout the review, we received a substantial volume of documentation. Our review focused only on those documents deemed relevant to our engagement letter. Consequently, we cannot ensure that we have seen all pertinent documents or information that may exist, nor can we comment on their completeness. Any additional documentation or information brought to our attention after the date of this report may necessitate adjustments to our findings.

The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 27, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
                 Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services

Re: **Revisions to the Library's Rules of Conduct**

Background
In 2019, the Library convened a task force charged with reviewing our [Rules of Conduct (ROC)](#) policy
and recommending any revisions needed to ensure it reflects the Library's institutional values and
commitment to providing a safe and welcoming environment for patrons and staff.

This work was put on hold during the pandemic, but the task force reconvened in 2022 with a focus on
identifying and addressing potentially inconsistent enforcement or inequitable impacts of the ROC on
patrons of color, younger patrons, patrons with accessibility needs, and patrons experiencing
homelessness. The task force hired an external consultant to facilitate engagement with these patrons and
help conduct an equity analysis through use of the City's RSJI racial equity toolkit.

In 2023, the task force engaged Library staff, patrons, and community members about the ROC policy
and related guidelines and procedures. Through surveys, meetings, and focus groups, the task force
solicited feedback and suggestions for improvements to the ROC from public services staff and security
officers who enforce the ROC and from patrons, like those mentioned above, who have had different
experiences navigating the ROC.

In 2024, guided by staff and patron feedback, the task force conducted a thorough review of ROC policy
language and related issues, including the guidelines for categorizing ROC violations, issuing exclusions
to patrons who violate the ROC, and determining the appropriate length of exclusions. The review also
covered recent changes to Library practice, like allowing eating and drinking in most public areas
systemwide, and state legislation prohibiting guns and other dangerous weapons in public libraries.

From 'Rules of Conduct' to 'Community Use Agreement'
After thorough review, the task force recommended a set of revisions to current ROC policy. Significant
revisions include:

- Changing the name of the policy from the "Rules of Conduct" to the "Community Use
  Agreement," which reflects the involvement of community members in developing these
  guidelines and presents more welcoming language regarding Library usage;

- Adopting the Community Use Agreement, a new policy framework based on general principles
  that are easier to understand and apply than the list of specific rules comprising current ROC
  policy, and better reflect the Library's institutional values and priorities;

- Adding policy language that entrusts staff to interpret the Community Use Agreement in accord with our commitments to [intellectual freedom](#) and [equity, racial and social justice](#), and to determine when behavior interferes with the use or operation of the Library or otherwise violates the Community Use Agreement;

- Updating policy language to align the Community Use Agreement with current Library practices regarding patrons sleeping or eating/drinking in the Library; and

- Updating policy language to align the Community Use Agreement with state legislation prohibiting guns and other dangerous weapons in public libraries.

The task force substantially completed its draft of proposed revisions to ROC policy language in late 2024. Subsequent to review by the Senior Management Team and City Attorney's Office, these proposed revisions will be finalized for submission to the Library Board of Trustees.

Board Consideration and Related Policy and Procedure Revisions
The Library plans to submit these proposed revisions of ROC policy language to the Library Board for consideration during its scheduled meeting on May 29, 2025.

Proposed changes to the Library's exclusion guidelines and procedures will also be included for Library Board awareness, but do not require Board action.

The Library is also drafting a set of proposed revisions to the [Rules of Conduct Enforcement and Administrative Review of Exclusion Orders](#) policy for the Library Board's consideration in the coming months.

Implementation Planning
LPSD Director Kai Tang is leading an implementation team to make sure staff are prepared for the systemwide transition to the Community Use Agreement. Her team is developing a variety of staff training opportunities, including required online training modules, in-person trainings during unit meetings, and training resource workbooks that managers and supervisors can use to conduct their own in-person trainings as needed. Virtual drop-in hours will be regularly scheduled for several weeks after implementation so staff can ask questions and get guidance. The public rollout of the Community Use Agreement will include new signage in print and digital formats, brochures, social media promotion, and a new webpage on spl.org.

Updates and additional information about implementation planning will be provided to the Library Board for discussion during its meeting on May 29, 2025.

Action required/requested: Informational only, no action requested at this time. Comments welcome.

The Seattle Public Library

Date: March 27, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Jessica Lucas, President, AFSCME Local 2083

Re: **March Union Report**

While Fixed Scheduling has brought an element of stability to staff's lives, our service points and branches are still understaffed due to delays in hiring and our additional open hours in 2025. Many of our smaller branches operate with 3 staff all day, leaving little time for Librarian work and contributing to safety issues. This is a difficult time of transition for public services staff.

For a very long time we have seen a diminishing government investment in library services in this country. With the most recent attack on the Institute of Museum and Library Services by the current Federal Administration we are concerned about the toll this will take on future prospects at SPL. Potential applicants are questioning whether to start or continue their careers in libraries. In addition, although we do not receive many Federal Grants, less money for services elsewhere will take a toll on us and possibly cause budget shifting to other City departments to keep programs running.

We have already seen an increase in difficulty to find qualified candidates for positions due to the high cost of living in the Seattle area and industry rumors of low staff morale. Now more than ever, we need to discuss what it actually means to be an employer of choice and take steps to move in that direction for our current and future staff. That means looking at our equity practices to make sure that all staff, from the very top of the hierarchal chain on downward, are committed to bringing equitable practices into their decision-making and actions. That means more staff to spread the load so that staff stop experiencing burnout.

A direct burden is falling on Intermittent staff (similar to a substitute program). As our staffing structure is changing, Intermittent staff find themselves facing new policies and continuing to experience problems with payroll due to the transition to Workday. Changes related to Floating staff hiring (Floating staff will now be called first to fill shifts, for example) were not fully communicated to them ahead of time, so they are finding out as things unfold, which leads to feeling isolated and less important. We need our Intermittent Staff to keep buildings open and provide coverage for programs and services that make our Library so important to our community; instead, we are driving them to look elsewhere. We look forward to working with Library Management to improve these practices in the future.

Action required/requested: Informational only.

The Seattle Public Library

News Releases
January & February 2025

Date	Title
01/02/2025	[The Seattle Public Library Expands Open Hours at Nine Locations Starting Wednesday, Jan. 29](#)
01/07/2025	[January and February 2025 Author Readings and Community Events](#)
01/16/2025	[The Sixth Annual Black-Owned Business Excellence Symposium Empowers Black Businesses on Feb. 1](#)
01/29/2025	[February 2025 Author Readings and Community Events With The Seattle Public Library](#)
02/03/2025	[The Seattle Public Library Announces the 2025 'Seattle Reads' Selection](#)
02/13/2025	[Free Tax Help Offered at 12 Seattle Public Library Locations](#)
02/28/2025	[March 2025 Author and Community Events with The Seattle Public Library](#)

The Seattle Public Library
MEDIA COVERAGE

Organization	Date	Headline	Details
West Seattle Blog	1-Jan-25	West Seattle Book Club, Free Fitness Programs, Music, More on Our List for 2025's First Thursday	"The Seattle Public Library's West Seattle branch will host the book club meeting."
Seattle Magazine	2-Jan-25	Must List: Top Events in Seattle This Week	"Don't miss the Seattle Public Library's author event this Thursday."
The Seattle Times	5-Jan-25	How to Read More in 2025	"The Seattle Public Library offers resources to help you read more this year."
My Ballard	13-Jan-25	Ballard Library Accepting Used Tech Devices and Small Appliances for Redistribution in Seattle	"The Seattle Public Library's Ballard branch is now accepting used tech devices."
Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce	13-Jan-25	Washington gets cybersecurity boost	"In the wake of the Seattle Public Library Hack, the Washington state Department of Commerce has been awarded $15.9 million in federal funding to boost cybersecurity and digital literacy."
West Seattle Blog	14-Jan-25	Singing, Dancing, Running, Playing, Screening, More for Your West Seattle Tuesday	"The Seattle Public Library's West Seattle branch is hosting a movie screening."
The Seattle Times	15-Jan-25	Where to Find Community in Seattle: Readers Share Their 'Third Places'	"Many readers mentioned the Seattle Public Library as a favorite third place."
Seattle's Child	20-Jan-25	Seattle Public Library Adds Hours at Nine Branches	"Starting next week, the Seattle Public Library will extend hours at nine branches."

Northwest Asian Weekly	25-Jan-25	The Seattle Public Library Expands Open Hours at 9 Locations Starting Jan 29	"The Seattle Public Library is expanding its operating hours at nine locations starting Jan. 29."
The Seattle Times	26-Jan-25	Seattle Public Library Branches to Expand Hours Soon	"Several branches of the Seattle Public Library will soon have extended hours."
FOX 13 Seattle	28-Jan-25	Seattle Public Library Hours Expanding	"The Seattle Public Library is set to expand its hours next month."
Seattle's Child	1-Feb-25	Lunar New Year Celebration at NewHolly Branch	"Join the Seattle Public Library's NewHolly branch for a Lunar New Year celebration."
KNKX	2-Feb-25	King County, Seattle Public Library E-Books, Audiobooks Digital Affordable Cost Publishers Authors Washington State Study	"The Seattle Public Library is part of a study on digital content costs."
Seattle Magazine	3-Feb-25	Six Things to Do in Seattle This Week	"Attend a lecture at the Seattle Public Library this Wednesday."
The Seattle Times	3-Feb-25	The Seattle Public Library Announces 2025 Seattle Reads Pick	"The Seattle Public Library has announced its 2025 Seattle Reads selection."
KUOW	3-Feb-25	Seattle Reads + KUOW Book Club: Celebrating National Poetry Month with Local Voices	"The Seattle Public Library is partnering with KUOW for National Poetry Month."
Seattle's Child	4-Feb-25	Seattle Public Library's Seattle Reads	"The Seattle Public Library's Seattle Reads program returns this year."
West Seattle Blog	5-Feb-25	Library, Pool, Park Changes/Closures	"The Seattle Public Library will open on a 2-hour delay due to snow."

West Seattle Blog	9-Feb-25	CLOSURE ALERT: Why High Point Library is closed today	"High Point Library is closed today."
Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce	10-Feb-25	Tech Innovations in Seattle's Public Spaces	"The Seattle Public Library has integrated new technologies to enhance user experience."
The Daily UW	10-Feb-25	University Branch Library Slated for Renovation, Closing Doors Until Late 2026	"The Seattle Public Library's University branch will close for renovations."
The Seattle Times	14-Feb-25	5 books that celebrate nonromantic love	"The Seattle Public Library recommends these titles that explore various forms of love beyond romance."
West Seattle Blog	14-Feb-25	TAX TIME: Here's how to get free help at three local libraries	"Local branches of the Seattle Public Library are offering free tax help at some branches."
The Seattle Medium	14-Feb-25	Seattle Public Library Offers Free Tax Help At 12 Locations Through Mid-April	"The Seattle Public Library, in partnership with United Way of King County (UWKC) and AARP, is offering free, in-person tax preparation services at 12 library locations through mid-April."
The Center Square	15-Feb-25	Washington state receives federal funds to bolster cybersecurity	"The funding comes in response to incidents like the Seattle Public Library hack."
KOMO News	15-Feb-25	Free tax help available at 12 Seattle Public Library locations	"The Seattle Public Library, in partnership with United Way of King County and AARP, is offering free, in-person tax preparation services at 12 library locations through mid-April."

[Queen Anne & Magnolia News](#)	19-Feb-25	Free tax help offered at 12 Seattle Public Library locations	"The Seattle Public Library, United Way of King County (UWKC) and AARP are collaborating to offer free, in-person tax preparation service through mid-April at 12 Library locations."
[Seattle Met](#)	20-Feb-25	When in Doubt, Trust a Peak Pick	"Since the program's inauguration in 2017, 800 titles, ranging from en vogue novels to big-name memoirs to cookbooks, have been designated Peak Picks at the Seattle Public Library."
[The Stranger](#)	26-Feb-25	Author Q&A: Omar El Akkad on Gaza, Power, and the Stories Empires Steal	"The Seattle Public Library will host Omar El Akkad for a discussion on his latest book."