

2023 Q2

The Seattle Public Library

LEVY REPORT



Inez and Elsa Craven on a 1924 Mt. Rainier outing (Special Collections)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Expanding services

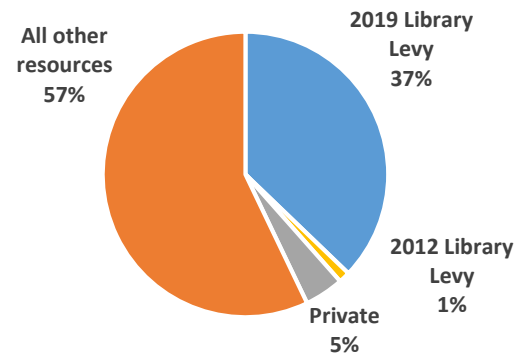
Levy background

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 2023, the 2019 Levy accounts for \$49 million (37%) of the Library's total revised budget of \$132 million.

The 2012 Levy provides \$1.7 million (1%). Other sources including the City's general fund, state and federal grants, private funds and Library fund balance account for the remainder. As part of its proposal to voters, the Library **laid out a clear framework for how 2019 Levy proceeds** would be used to maintain services that had been funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs over the seven-year levy period. This report, which covers levy activities and spending for Q2 2023, continues the series of quarterly levy updates the Library has provided for the Board of Trustees and the public since 2013.

2023 Library Revised Budget (\$132M)



Beyond renewing 2012 levy commitments, the 2019 Levy provides support for additional Library hours; elimination of overdue fines; improved collections and technology; safer, cleaner buildings; specialized programming and services for children; and development of a plan for the future of library service.

Q2 2023 highlights: Expanded hours and strategic planning

During Q2 2023, the Library continued to adapt to meet the needs of Seattle residents in the levy investment areas of Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Children's Programming, and Maintenance.

As you'll read in this report, in Q2, we continued to restore Library services for Seattle residents and significantly expanded Library hours. By the end of March, libraries were open at 94% of our hours before the pandemic and 96% of our 2019 hours. By the first week of April, we had added 90+ hours per week over 2019 levels, for an overall increase of 7% in operating hours. The allocation of these hours was informed by our [2021 public survey](#) and our continued effort to provide safe conditions for our patrons and staff. To support new hours, we are in the process of hiring two additional security officers to ensure our branches are safe and welcoming environments.

Beyond expanding hours in Q2, we continued in-person Play and Learn sessions for pre-K children and parents at five branches and restarted in-person story times, with a special emphasis on serving children and families most impacted by the pandemic. We also celebrated the 25th Anniversary of our Seattle Reads program in May, with Julie Otsuka, author of “The Swimmers,” who was returning to Seattle Reads for the second time. Many programming activities are supported in part by The Seattle Public Library Foundation. We continually seek to leverage levy funds with funding from other sources to stay connected and nimble in service to the residents of Seattle.

Strategizing for the future

In early 2023, Executive Director and Chief Librarian Tom Fay presented annual Goals and Priorities to the Library Board of Trustees for the remainder of this year. This work includes:

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

“I am a long time resident of Seattle but have not had a SPL library card in years! Thank you for making it so accessible and easy! I’m looking forward to looking through all the resources and exploring the library again.”

With the [Strategic Foresight](#) process complete, the Library has moved forward with a strategic planning process that invites community partners, staff and other key Library stakeholders to envision ways to implement the preferred future as the Library evolves over the next 10 years. In June, the Library hired Strategy & Policy Advisor Jessica Smith to help steer the development of the plan, among other responsibilities. She has been working closely with the Library’s Strategic Plan core team and Territory, a consultant firm specializing in strategic plans, to engage internal and external stakeholders and design the plan.

Additionally, we hired Práctica Consulting to perform qualitative analysis on the stakeholder engagement interviews, focus groups, and employee survey results that occurred between April and June 2023. This independent, third-party analysis will help to reduce Library bias, facilitator bias, and employee bias as we incorporate direct feedback from our valued stakeholders into the design and refinement of the strategic plan. Through the fall, the Library will continue to engage patrons, staff, stakeholders and community in discussing the future of the Library through facilitated discussions, interviews and surveys.

A draft plan will be presented to the public, Library stakeholders, and the Library’s Board of Trustees in late 2023. The levy allocated \$200,000 toward this planning effort. Additional financial support is being provided by Library gift funds.

Increasing access

The Hours and Access category of the 2019 Levy supports operating hours in neighborhood branches and the Central Library; providing access to Library programs and services in the community; and outreach and engagement services throughout the city. Many elements of this levy category relate to increasing access to Library services through measures such as eliminating late fees and adding open hours. The revised levy budget in 2023 for the Hours and Access category is \$13.3 million.

In early 2020, we eliminated overdue fines and started opening our branches one hour earlier on Sundays, the first step in what was intended to be more than 10,000 new Library hours each year funded by the levy. In the wake of COVID closures, restrictions and related staffing challenges, it took us several years to restore open hours to pre-pandemic levels and begin expanding hours to fulfill this levy promise. With hours added in late March and early April, our libraries are now scheduled to be open 7% more hours than they were open in 2019. When the Green Lake Branch opens after its seismic retrofit renovation, the Library will have increased open hours by 10% (see Table 1. Weekly hours in 2023 compared to 2019 baseline and pre-pandemic services levels).

With our new schedule, most branches are open more hours per week than in 2019, though some branches have experienced minor reductions as the Library prioritizes meeting levy commitments to serve historically marginalized communities, while balancing the need for higher staffing levels to operate in a post-pandemic environment.

Library hours have expanded the most (compared to 2019) at the South Park, Delridge, NewHolly, International District/Chinatown, and High Point branches. At the Beacon Hill, Northeast and Rainier Beach branches, which have seen slightly reduced weekly open hours, we have installed pickup lockers to provide 24/7 access to physical holds. Pick-up lockers are now in five locations and a sixth locker will be installed at Greenwood Branch later this year with funding from the State.

Our [2021 community survey](#) revealed that patrons preferred additional weekend hours over



Pickup locker at Broadview Branch

weekday evening hours, so, we focused on adding weekend hours in the spring of 2023. Every branch is now scheduled to be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Starting in June, we made further adjustments to weekday schedules at several branches that lack air-conditioning (Fremont, NewHolly, Northeast, and Southwest branches) to take advantage of the cooler morning hours. This seasonal adjustment resulted in fewer unplanned closures due to extreme heat than in the summer of 2022. Evening hours at those branches will resume in September.

Keeping Library spaces clean and safe is another important levy priority. Due to the increased severity of security incidents in and around our buildings, the Library allocated levy funds from prior year savings to hire two new security officers through the remainder of the levy period. As of mid-September, we are still actively recruiting. We have undertaken other initiatives to enhance the safety and cleanliness of our facilities. In March 2023, we installed air-quality sensors in all Lake City Branch public restrooms to alert staff to possible drug smoking activity, as well as signage to inform patrons of the monitoring. Since the installation of the sensors and signage, drug activity in the Lake City Branch restrooms seems to be decreasing and we are evaluating whether this technology would be useful in other locations. Our security staff have also begun early morning patrols at high-incident branches to ensure our buildings are clean and safe before opening. Finally, we are in the process of upgrading our security cameras at the Central Library and installing new cameras at Ballard, Capitol Hill and Lake City branches. We are hoping to have cameras installed by the end of the year.

In-house social services team

In Q2, we continued to build our in-house Social Services team by hiring a new senior community resource specialist who will serve as the program manager for our social services program. She will directly supervise and work closely with our young adult community resource specialist.

The Social Services team provided 152 referrals and support in Q2 to patrons at the Central Library for housing, food, clothing, mental health, employment and other areas. The team also distributed emergency supplies through branches and the Central Library Level 5 Mixing Chamber to over 100 individuals. Our community resource specialist works with patrons daily to connect them to resources, providing assistance that can be life altering. One patron, concerned about accessing traditional social service organizations due to stigma shared, "This means so much to me. I'm going to cry. All my life I've been using libraries but I've never gotten help like I have from you. There should be social workers in every library."

"I like coming here. I'm homeless but nobody gives me a hard time. I feel safe and don't have to worry about being bothered. I get to relax."

The Social Services team has successfully convened a system-wide workgroup with representatives from all over the Library. The workgroup met twice in Q2 to share resources, develop a staff survey and create reference tools for frontline staff to support patrons in need of social services reference and referral and communicates on a daily basis. Workgroup members, who serve as social services leads in their respective units, bolster reference and referral services provided by the Social Services team.

In-person and virtual programming and services

In Q2, we continued to offer in-person Tax Help sessions in partnership with United Way of King County at the Central Library, including 23 sessions in the post-filing season between May and July. Through April, over 3,000 tax returns were filed at Library locations this year.

In early February, we expanded our free after-school Homework Help to eight locations, adding two Homework Help sessions a week at South Park and Northgate branches. We also increased the number of days we offered Homework Help at Rainier Beach, Columbia and High Point branches. By the end of June, we were offering about 16 sessions a week system-wide and students had visited over 2,400 times since the beginning of the year.

The Central Library hosted 25 public events during Q2, including an event and exhibit celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Seattle Reads, the Library's citywide book group, featuring Julie Otsuka, the only author whose books have been selected for Seattle Reads twice. At programs at the Central Library, Lake City branch and two senior centers, Otsuka read from her latest book "The Swimmers" and engaged with local experts about dementia and Japanese American history. Our marketing staff began promoting the events in March and created a separate webpage for [Seattle Reads 2023](#). Nearly 600 patrons attended in person events and the event at the Central Library was live-streamed. The 25th Anniversary of Seattle Reads was also celebrated with an [exhibit](#) in the Level 8 gallery at the Central Library which ran from April 24-June 26, 2023. Seattle Reads was the first program of its kind and has been replicated throughout the world, from Dublin, Ireland, to Bucheon, Korea. Seattle Reads is supported with funding from The Seattle Library Foundation.

For the last nine years, with support from The Seattle Public Library Foundation, we've partnered with Seattle Arts & Lectures (SAL) to provide a Summer Book Bingo program for adults. Every year, our staff curates booklists for each of the Book Bingo categories, giving participants a variety of reading recommendations to read to encourage and enhance their experience. We also produced a Spanish version of Book Bingo, [Lotería de Lectura](#), focused on passion points of Hispanic/Latino culture in an effort to reach this target audience.



As we expand our in-person programs and services, we continue to offer essential services and programs in virtual or hybrid formats. We offered over 60 virtual programs in the second quarter, including author talks, business workshops, English circles and citizenship classes. We also offered 250 videos on our official SPL YouTube channel, including 10 new programs published in the second quarter on topics ranging from author readings to workshops for small business owners. Overall, our videos were viewed more than 10,000 times. Our most popular new recording was the Seattle Reads event at the Central Library with Julie Otsuka, author of "The Swimmers." This video, available only for two weeks after the Seattle Reads event in May, was viewed over 260 times.

Building robust collections in print and digital formats

The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintaining and expanding the Library’s collection of physical and digital materials. The levy includes additional funding for e-books, e-audiobooks and streaming services; continuation of Peak Picks; and funds to support the acquisition and digitization of local history items. In 2023, the 2019 Levy provides \$5.9 million in the Collection category, including \$4.6 million for books and materials.

Demand for digital collections increasing, and costing us more

More and more patrons are accessing electronic resources at SPL. Over 116,000 patrons downloaded more than 1.3 million digital books (e-books and e-audiobooks) through OverDrive in Q2, an increase of 18% in users and 15% in items checked out compared to Q2 2022. While use of e-audiobooks and e-books soared, use of SPL streaming services declined, with 8% fewer patrons using Kanopy, a video streaming service, and 10% fewer using Hoopla, a service for streaming music and comics, compared to Q2 2022.

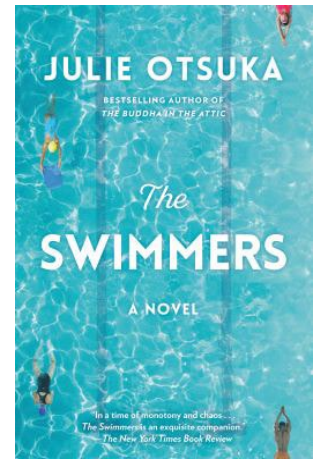
“I recently figured out how to download an audio book to my phone. I love your books, your magazines, DVDs, special events, displays, librarians!”



In April, with funding from the Seattle Library Foundation, the Library joined Books Unbanned, an initiative started by Brooklyn Public Library in 2022 that offers teens and young adults across the nation a digital library card for free access to SPL’s e-book and e-audiobook collections. The card, available via a simple online form, is intended for 13- to 26-year-olds outside the Library’s service area. Books Unbanned, which helps counter the series of increasingly coordinated and effective efforts to

remove books from public and school libraries across the nation, supports the Library’s core value of intellectual freedom. The Library’s Books Unbanned program received widespread media interest from the day it was launched, with stories in the biggest media outlets locally (KUOW, the Seattle Times, including this [Danny Westneat column](#), King 5, Seattle Channel) and many nationwide outlets. Media coverage seems to have been a big driver of Books Unbanned signups – as of the end of June, the program had more than 3,000 signups from all 50 states and Puerto Rico, and Books Unbanned cardholders checked out more than 13,800 digital items.

The Library acquired 28,000 digital copies from OverDrive during Q2 2023, a quantity similar to the amount we acquired in Q2 2022. Our sustained investment in digital materials keeps our collections current and relevant to our patrons and we have worked creatively to make titles available when patrons want them. For example, during Q2, with levy funds, the Library offered “always available” access to both the e-book and e-audiobook editions of “The Swimmers” by Julie Otsuka, the 25th Anniversary Seattle Reads selection. Through this licensing arrangement, patrons were able to check out the digital versions of title over 6,600 times in the two months leading up to the Seattle Reads programming events.



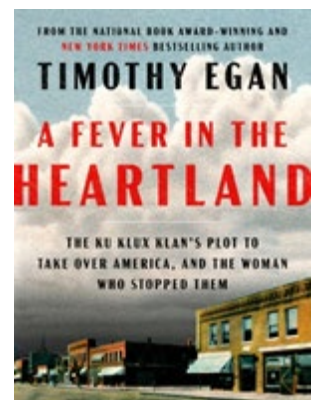
However, increasing demand and the high cost of e-materials has put a lot of pressure on Library budgets. E-books and e-audiobooks are often 3-5 times more expensive than their physical counterparts, and, depending on the licensing, often need to be repurchased each year to keep in the collection. The Library is actively looking for solutions to manage the costs of e-materials.

Notable Q2 acquisitions include 180 digital books for adults in Arabic, French, German, Italian, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese and 170 digital books for children in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. Highlights include popular “Big Nate” comics in French, “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” volumes in Chinese and German, “Dogman” comics in Spanish, and “The Little Prince” in Arabic.

Building physical collections

Demand for physical materials is holding steady as e–book checkouts grow. In Q2, we circulated nearly 1.4 million items, about the same as 2Q 2022. As patrons request materials in a variety of formats, we continue to deliver on our levy promise of more materials when patrons want them.

[Peak Picks](#), the Library’s popular no-holds, no-wait collection of high interest titles, continues to be popular in its sixth year with nearly 37,000 Peak Picks checked out in Q2, an increase of nearly 8% from the same quarter in 2022. The most popular Peak Picks title during this period was the nonfiction thriller “A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan’s Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them” by Timothy Egan, a bestselling Seattle author.



We added 30 Peak Picks titles and over 4,600 copies in Q2. Highlights include the historical thriller “The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder” by David Grann; the celebratory “Project 562: Changing the Way We See Native America” by Swinomish and Tulalip photographer Matika Wilbur; and the triumphant memoir “Pageboy” by transgender advocate Elliot Page.

In the second quarter we added more than 300 titles and 1,000 copies to the print and digital collections that amplify the voices and experiences of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups with titles that focused on deaf studies; neurodivergence; and Hawaiian and Polynesian culture). We also re-furbished print classics for adults, including those by

LGBTQIA+ authors, along with new copies of books by luminaries such as Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, and Zora Neale Hurston. We also added a mix of picture books, chapter books and nonfiction for children, including “Resistance Stories from Black History for Kids: Inspiring People and Events that Every Kid Should Know” by Rann Miller and “An Asian-American ABC: A Children’s Guide to Our History” by Cathy Linh Che.

In 2022, a comprehensive diversity audit of our physical and digital collections revealed that our collections are among the most diverse found in North American public libraries.

Adding to local history collections

In Q2, we completed work on our Washington State Digital Heritage Grant, which supported the addition of materials to our Black Culture and History Collection. In April we added over 100 items created by the Seattle Urban League from the 1940s to the 1970s, which covered topics such as the League’s efforts to improve race relations and combat racial discrimination in the areas of education, housing, health and employment. Over the course of the grant, we also digitized selections from the Samuel McKinney, LeEtta Sanders King and Maid Adams collections, adding a total of 297 new items and scanning 1,958 pages of content. Digitization helps bring these materials together and makes them more easily accessible and searchable for patrons researching Seattle’s Black community.



Also during Q2, the Library acquired seven photograph albums that document early hikes and climbs organized by the Mountaineers, an outdoor recreation organization established in 1906. The photographs, taken between 1910 and 1924, provide a unique view into the early years of recreational hiking and climbing in Washington State and include many photos of women members. Highlights include photographs of a Glacier Peak climb in 1910 showing numerous women on the trail, images of women hikers during a 1924 Mt. Rainier outing and a photograph of Mabel Furry, daughter of Seattle City Councilman George Furry. Mabel was awarded the Mountaineers "Six Peaks Pin" in 1924 for having climbed Mt. Olympus, Baker, Rainier, St. Helens, Adams and Glacier Peak.



Mabel Furry on a 1911 outing in the Olympic mountains

Keeping our technology up to date

The 2019 Levy promises around technology include dedicated funding to support the Library's digital equity efforts; replacing infrastructure for public internet access; replacing outdated technology for acquisition and circulation of books and materials; and maintaining and upgrading public technologies and the spl.org website. The levy provides \$2.4 million to support technology operating expenses in 2023 and \$6.4 million, including \$5.2 million in carryforward, for the technology capital program.

Digital equity and the HotSpot circulation program

Internet access is a critical need for everything from job-seeking help to social connection to remote learning. The 2019 Levy is the primary funding source for our HotSpot program. The Library offered 1,130 hot spots in the second quarter of 2023, including 850 that were available to all patrons via our catalogue, 30 that were available through our Mobile Services team and an additional 250 available to patrons and community partners through our outreach team. Hot spots in our catalogue were checked out more than 1,500 times. Average wait times for hot spots increased because we were replacing older hot spot devices with newer models, but hot spots still have the lowest holds to items ratio for any item in the Library's collection. By 2024 Q1, all older models will be replaced by newer models and wait times should go down again. Hot spot devices see heavy usage at the Library and have a lifespan of about three years.

“Thank you for making the very dependable hot spot available to senior citizens.”

We also made 138 new loans of outreach hot spots for long-term access. Our ongoing partnerships with SHARE/WHEEL, API Chaya, FEEST and Chief Seattle Club continue to support long-term access to internet and resources benefiting people disproportionately impacted by the digital divide. The Library has recently developed a digital equity strategy and is working on creating a community informed process that advances community-identified priorities while leveraging library expertise and resources. In order to allow space for that work, no substantial changes or additions to the Outreach Hotspot Program or partnerships will take place through 2023.

Library staff continued in-person outreach with Tiny House Village communities in Interbay, South Lake Union, and the Central District. Based on residents expressed interests, staff shared information about upcoming writing programs at the Library, Your Next Job, tax help, discounted Orca cards, and Homework Help. One resident was excited that the Library could help them learn about resources for publishing a children's book. We look forward to continuing to work towards equitable access to Library resources and trustworthy information in our city.

Expanding access to computers, scanners and more

In Q2, more than 16,000 people used Library computers over 84,000 times, with 4% more people and 13% more sessions than Q2 2022. Laptop checkouts alone more than doubled, with 1,400 bookings in Q2 2023 compared to less than 600 in Q2 2022. Over 400,000 pages were printed through our printing stations in Q2.

In the second quarter, we continued to modernize and improve patron-facing technology, including upgrading all the public computers at Fremont and Madrona Sally-Goldmark branches. Last year, we upgraded self-checkout stations at 11 branches. This equipment continues to perform well. System-wide, patrons used self-checkout over 290,000 times to borrow close to 760,000 physical items in Q2.

In an effort to create opportunities for high-quality hybrid staff meetings and public programming, the Library has deployed 17 hybrid carts throughout the system. These carts include 4K High definition cameras, 75-inch displays and meeting control touchscreens which allow for hybrid (in person and online) meetings at Library locations. We have tested the functionality of the carts at several staff meetings and began planning for an all-staff Strategic Planning town hall in September. As we test these carts and learn more, we are preparing to use this technology for public programs at the Central Library and at neighborhood branches. Our goal is to offer accessible hybrid options for our communities going forward.

We have also been upgrading our data management systems. By the end of June, we installed technology for counting in-person visits at 20 of our 27 locations. We anticipate that we will have new equipment operating in all locations by the end of September. This new technology, which replaces obsolete wireless devices on our security gates, is located in the ceilings above our entrances, providing for more accurate and maintenance-free tracking of in-person visits. It also allows us to track entrances and exits at each location by hour, giving us new insight into how long patrons visit the Library.

“I’ve been using your email to print service fairly often over the last year or so and I just want to express my thanks for how simple and reliable that system is. Some free pages is also a nice plus!”

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SUPPORTING CHILDREN

Expanding early learning options for children

Play & Learn continues, in-person story time resumes

The 2019 Levy promised additional support for Library early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5, providing about \$300,000 in 2023. A key element of our early learning program is our continued support for the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program, which offers drop-in neighborhood-based play groups for the Family, Friend and Neighbor Care (FFN) community. Weekly sessions, facilitated by early childhood educators, are available to children up to 5 years

old. Parents, caregivers, and children are guided through a variety of developmental activities that promote early learning. The Library partners with local community-based organizations and agencies to offer these programs by providing meeting room space, program supplies, website promotion and early literacy support from our children’s librarians. The levy provides direct funding to support local community-based organizations and evaluate programs and services provided.

Working with long-time partners, Denise Louie Education Center and Chinese Information and Services Center, the Library continued in-person programs at Beacon Hill, Columbia, Lake City, Rainier Beach branches and a Play and Learn group with Villa Comunitaria at the South Park Branch. Providing these high-quality early learning experiences year round ensures participants have continued access to programs with minimal disruptions and provides host branches opportunities to promote other library summer programs such as Summer of Learning. Beginning in September 2023, the Columbia Branch will begin delivering Play and Learn sessions in both Amharic and English. Bilingual programs are already offered at Beacon Hill (Chinese and English) and South Park (Spanish and English) branches. We are excited to begin promoting this new opportunity to targeted audiences.

We are continuing to evaluate how we can best support the expansion of programming for children 0-5. This fall, we intend to use levy funds and resources from other sources to expand programming with a new partnership with East African Services Center to offer Play and Learn in Somali and English at the NewHolly Branch and, potentially, at Delridge Branch, by offering a second Spanish and English Play and Learn group with Villa Comunitaria. The new group at the NewHolly Branch will start this fall with outreach and engagement to prioritized communities in the NewHolly community with broader community outreach once the program has operated for several months. If we proceed with a second Spanish Play and Learn group at the Delridge Branch, we will follow a similar outreach and engagement model.

While we have had success in bringing back most Play and Learn partners and establishing new partnership, the financial landscape has changed for our service providers. Due to inflation and the need to pay higher wages to program facilitators, our annual costs to support Play and Learn groups has outstripped annual levy resources. We intend to use levy savings to support Play and Learn providers through 2024, but to continue the same level of service in 2025 and beyond, we may need to find resources beyond the levy.

In April, we brought back in-person story times and other early learning programs for the first time since the pandemic as part of a tiered rollout for children ages 0-5, and their caregivers. With over 160 new Library staff since 2022, the tiered rollout allowed new(er) staff to learn alongside colleagues to build skills and knowledge. In developing our early learning programs for 2023, the Library is listening to and working with community groups to develop programs that advance our



equity goals, are culturally appropriate, and, when possible, community-led. During Q2, we offered over 180 story times at 18 branches, the Central Library and in the community. In October, we will be re-introducing in-person Fire Fighter story time at the Central Library and Lake City and South Park branches with plans to add the program to our regular story time monthly rotation at branches throughout the system.

Beyond in-person programming, we continued to offer a robust menu of virtual programs through our Kids' YouTube channel, including over 180 different videos of story times, Play and Learn programs, and children's activities online that are available to the public to enjoy at any time. Although we are not currently creating new content for our Kid's YouTube channel as we once again focus on in-person children's activities, some of the videos we created during our in-person programming hiatus have generated sustained interest from our youngest patrons. Our virtual fire station tours in English and Spanish and our video "What Firemen Wear" were viewed an average of 90 times per day in the second quarter.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: MAINTENANCE

Protecting our investments

The 2019 Levy promised to maintain Library buildings, preserve funding for major maintenance and add resources to undertake earthquake retrofits for the [historic Columbia, Green Lake and University branches](#). The 2019 Levy provides about \$1.9 million in 2023 to support routine maintenance and \$18.4 million to support major maintenance and seismic work.

Routine maintenance: Keeping our facilities clean and safe

The Levy provides \$1.9 million in 2023 budget and prior carry-forward authority to support enhanced levels of routine maintenance. In Q2, our facilities and janitorial team faced unique challenges and opportunities for keeping the Library clean, safe, and accessible. They completed over 1,850 work orders in Q2, and continued to address an increase in incidents of vandalism and drug use at our locations. As described in the access section, we have also taken a number of steps to ensure our facilities are safe for staff and patrons, including installing air sensor equipment in the restrooms at Lake City, having security staff conduct early morning patrols at branches in neighborhoods that experience high levels of illegal activity during the hours we are closed, and preparing for the installation of security cameras at the Central Library and Ballard, Capitol Hill and Lake City branches.

Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

The 2019 Levy provides \$7.6 million in 2023 budget authority and \$10.8 million in carryforward authority for major maintenance and seismic work. The 2012 levy provided an additional \$1.3 million in carryforward authority. In Q2, the Library spent nearly \$2.2 million of 2019 levy funds on seismic, major maintenance and IT capital work and over \$10,000 of 2012 levy funds.

In Q2, the Library made progress on several of the largest projects in our capital improvement program funded by the levy. Construction for the Green Lake Branch seismic retrofit project is underway and will continue through early 2024. Permitting has been submitted for the University Branch seismic retrofit; the public construction bid is tentatively scheduled for late 2024. Architect SHKS has also been retained for a rough scope and cost estimate for the Columbia Branch seismic retrofit due in mid-2023.



New roof at Queen Anne Branch

However, these projects have also experienced challenges and delays. Widespread supply chain issues have slowed -- or temporarily suspended -- progress. Material scarcity and exponential increases in construction inflation continue to add pressure to already tight project budgets. The University Branch is scheduled for electrification and HVAC upgrades concurrent with its seismic retrofit. That project does not yet have final cost projections, but the cascade effect of several large project bids exceeding architectural estimates could lead to a 5 or 6 million dollar shortfall. In combination with REET revenue reductions, these factors could push the third scheduled seismic levy-funded project – the Columbia Branch retrofit – beyond the current 2020-2026 levy period.

Progress on other significant projects in Q2 include the roof replacement at the Queen Anne Branch and exterior access improvements at the Douglass-Truth Branch, which are both substantially complete. Sewer issues at Douglass-Truth Branch (unrelated to the prior exterior construction) have necessitated separate site work. The Library's new Automated Materials Handling System (AMHS) went live at the Maintenance and Operations Center (MOC) in early Q3, transitioning from Level 2 at Central Library. The new system features upgrades such as a tote de-stacker, two bulk induction systems and handheld scanners that will increase efficiency in the materials handling process.

Finally, construction was completed on the Capitol Hill Branch roof; HVAC/mechanical systems units are tentatively scheduled to arrive in September. Permits have been approved for electrification upgrades for the Northeast and Southwest branches, which notably include the addition of air conditioning; the lead-time for equipment will delay construction, with completion expected by the end of 2023. We also completed high-priority ADA restroom access improvements to Madrona-Sally Goldmark, Capitol Hill, Montlake, Northeast and Rainier Beach branches in Q2.

Soul Pole 50th anniversary celebration: In April 2023, a public celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Soul Pole being installed at the Douglass-Truth Branch was held in partnership with Historic Seattle.

Speakers included Elijah Mu'ied, son of Raqib Mu'ied (formerly Gregory X), who designed the Soul Pole with Rotary Boys Club youth in the late 1960s; Taelore Rhoden of Historic Seattle; Stephanie Johnson-Toliver of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State; as well



Family members of Raqib Mu'ied at Soul Pole celebration

as African American Collection librarian Taylor Brooks and Chief Librarian Tom Fay. The event was filled with people who had turned out to celebrate "50 years of community at this corner," including many family members of Raqib Mu'ied and Soul Pole artist Brenda Davis, as well as leaders from organizations including Alpha Kappa Alpha and the Northwest African American Museum.

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead:

As you'll read in our 2023 third quarter report, our staff continue to adapt, enhance, and launch services and programs to help our community. Here's a quick preview:

- Continued challenges at non-air conditioned branches
- Cost of digital materials
- Summer of Learning 2023

2023 Financials

The 2019 Levy accounts for \$49 million (37%) of the Library's total revised 2023 budget of \$132 million. The 2012 Levy accounts for \$1.7 million. The City's General Fund, and other sources, including The Seattle Public Library Foundation, state and federal grants fund the remainder.

Spending tables below show the 2023 Operations Plan Budget plus encumbrances and unspent budget authority from 2022 in the revised budget columns. Unspent prior year budget authority of \$16 million from the 2019 levy and \$1.7 million from the 2012 levy are available for spending in 2023.

	2023 Ops Plan Budget	2023 Revised Budget*	2023 YTD Exp.	Available	% Revised Budget Spent
2019 Levy					
Hours & Access	13,283,000	13,327,302	5,709,602	7,617,700	43%
Collections	5,800,000	5,907,076	3,059,162	2,847,914	52%
Technology & Online Services	2,563,000	2,403,817	1,088,831	1,314,986	45%
Children's Programming	301,000	297,308	105,629	191,679	36%
Maintenance	1,832,000	1,873,460	842,876	1,030,584	45%
Administration	300,000	292,916	226,445	66,470	77%
Capital Improvement Program	8,894,000	24,904,429	3,441,874	21,462,555	14%
Total	32,973,000	49,006,309	14,474,420	34,531,889	30%

*Includes \$23k in operating carry-forward and \$16M in capital carry-forward budget authority. There is an additional \$474k associated with legislated carry-forward that will be included in the Q3 financials.

	2023 Ops Plan Budget	2023 Revised Budget*	2023 YTD Exp.	Available	% Revised Budget Spent
2012 Levy					
Technology & Online Services			42,672	(42,672)	N/A
Maintenance					
Capital Improvement Program		1,684,622	675,829	1,008,793	40%
Total		1,684,622	718,501	966,121	43%

* Entire 18100 budget consists of carry-forward budget authority. There is an additional \$267k associated with legislated carry-forward that will be included in the Q3 financials.

Table 1. Weekly hours in 2023 compared to 2019 baseline and pre-pandemic services levels

Location	2019 Baseline	Jan. 1 - Mar. 13, 2020	Jan. 1 - Mar. 20, 2023	Mar. 21 - Apr 2, 2023	Apr. 3, 2023 until Green Lake Opens	When Green Lake Opens
Ballard Branch	60	61	59	62	62	62
Beacon Hill Branch	60	61	57	57	56	56
Broadview Branch	60	61	57	62	62	56
Capitol Hill Branch	60	61	55	55	62	62
Central Library	62	62	54	62	62	62
Columbia Branch	60	61	53	53	56	56
Delridge Branch	39	40	40	40	56	56
Douglass-Truth Branch	60	61	55	55	62	62
Fremont Branch	39	40	40	48	48	48
Green Lake Branch	39	40	33	CLOSED	CLOSED	56
Greenwood Branch	60	61	61	61	62	62
High Point Branch	46	47	47	47	62	62
International District/Chinatown Branch	46	47	42	42	62	62
Lake City Branch	60	61	61	61	62	62
Madrona-Sally Goldmark Branch	39	40	40	40	48	48
Magnolia Branch	39	40	33	48	48	48
Montlake Branch	39	40	40	40	48	48
NewHolly Branch	39	40	33	33	56	56
Northeast Branch	60	61	57	57	56	56
Northgate Branch	60	61	57	56	56	56
Queen Anne Branch	39	40	35	48	48	48
Rainier Beach Branch	60	61	59	59	56	56
South Park Branch	46	47	47	47	62	62
Southwest Branch	60	61	45	45	56	56
University Branch	46	47	47	47	48	48
Wallingford Branch	39	40	40	48	56	48
West Seattle Branch	60	61	45	45	56	56
Total Weekly Hours	1,377	1,403	1,292	1,318	1,468	1,510
Hours as a % of 2019 baseline		102%	94%	96%	107%	110%
Hours as a % of pre-pandemic		100%	92%	94%	105%	108%