

2024 Q1

# The Seattle Public Library LEVY REPORT



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Expanding services and navigating transitions

### Levy background

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

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

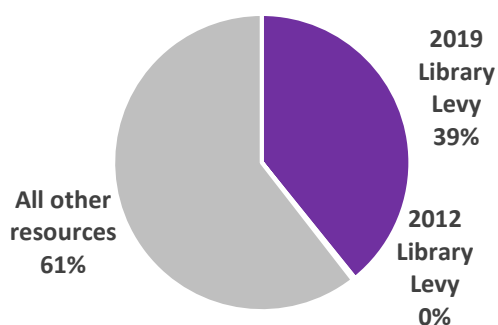
**for how 2019 Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services that had been funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs over the seven-year levy period.** This report, which covers levy activities and spending for Q1 2024, continues the series of quarterly levy updates the Library has provided for the Board of Trustees and the public since 2013.

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

### Q1 2024 highlights: Delivering on hours amidst uncertainty

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

2024 Library Revised Budget  
(\$124.5M)



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS & ACCESS

### Opening doors and increasing access

The Hours and Access category of the 2019 Levy supports operating hours in neighborhood branches and the Central Library; providing access to Library programs and services in the community; and outreach and engagement services throughout the city. Many elements of this levy category relate to increasing access to Library services through measures such as eliminating late fees and adding open hours. The revised levy budget in 2024 for the Hours and Access category is \$13.8 million.

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

The new schedule included the following changes:

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

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

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

## **Operating Challenges Continue**

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

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

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

## **Reducing barriers to Library services**

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

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

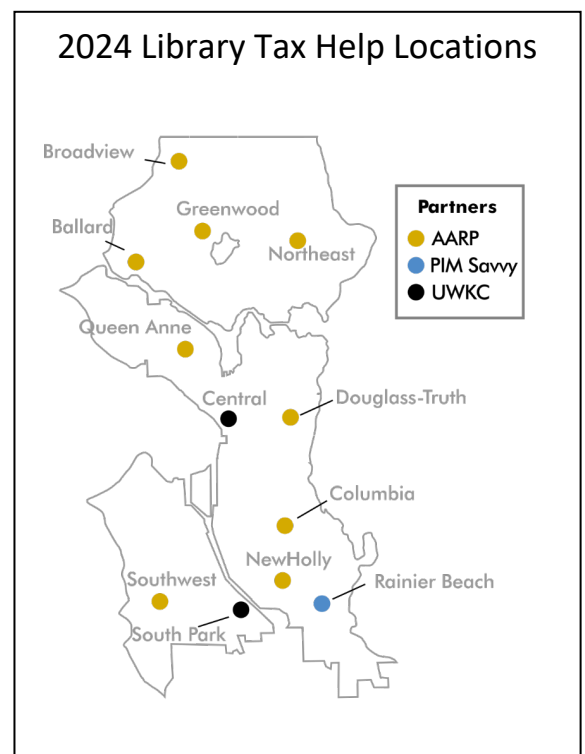
Another area where we are trying to increase access and reduce barriers is language access. Our marketing staff have been developing multilingual resources for programs such as Adult Tutoring/Basic Skills, English Conversation Circles and a new program, English for Work. In addition, we have translated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

## In-person and virtual programs and services

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

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

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





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



Global Reading Challenge Final, Central Library Auditorium. March 2024

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

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

## **In-house Social Services team**

In Q1 2024, our in-house Social Services Team continued to create safe and welcoming community spaces and events, provide referrals to lifeline services and make a difference in our patrons’ lives. Comprising a social services librarian, a senior community resource specialist and a levy-funded community resource specialist focused on youth up to age 26, this team provides expertise to the Library on social service resources, coordinates with other providers, works closely with our security team to support staff in de-escalation and trauma-informed practices and assists patrons in need of referrals or who are in crisis. The team meets regularly with Library staff throughout the system to share information and engage in problem solving.

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

- Patron receiving support from Social Services Team

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

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



Social Services Resource Fair, Central Library

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

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

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: COLLECTIONS

### **Building robust collections in print and digital formats**

The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintaining and expanding the Library's collection of physical and digital materials. The levy includes additional funding for e-books, e-audiobooks and



streaming services; continuation of Peak Picks; and funds to support the acquisition and digitization of local history items. In 2024, the 2019 Levy provided \$5.9 million in the Collections category, including \$4.5 million for books and materials.

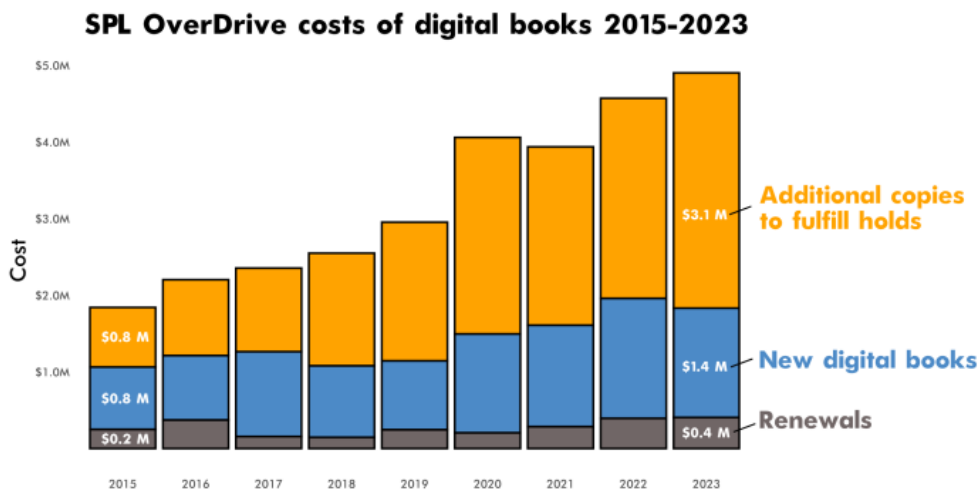
## Digital collections reaching more people

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

## The impact of increased demand for digital materials

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

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



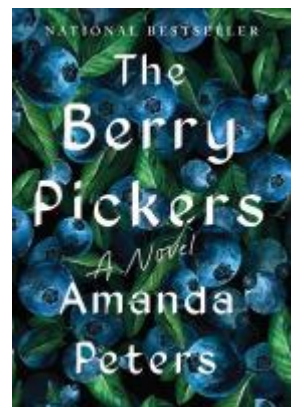
To address these challenges, after reviewing a number of strategies for managing increasing digital book costs, in mid-March the Library announced that it would reduce the maximum number of holds patrons can place for e-books and e-audiobooks in OverDrive from 25 to 10 at one time. While this was a difficult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

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

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

## Investments in physical materials

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



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

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

## More local history online and in the Seattle Room

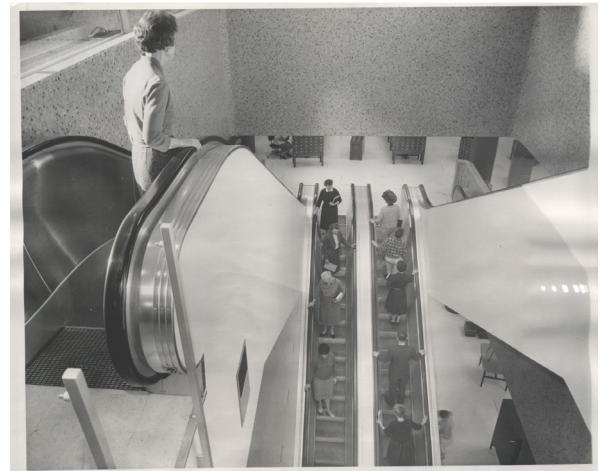
This quarter we had three significant additions to our digital collections. We added nearly 2,000 issues of [Northwest Asian Weekly](#), spanning from 1983 to 2023, to our digital archives with the help of Assunta Ng, the paper’s founder, editor and publisher. This collection is a rich resource for news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



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

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

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



Escalator at the Central Library, 1960

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

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

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: TECHNOLOGY

### Keeping our technology up to date

The 2019 Levy promises around technology include dedicated funding for digital equity offerings; replacing infrastructure for public internet access; replacing outdated technology for acquisition and circulation; and maintaining and upgrading public technologies and the spl.org website. Since the start of the pandemic, our presence online has grown. The levy provides \$2.7 million in budget authority to support technology operating expenses in 2024 and \$6.2 million, including \$5.6 million in carryforward, for the technology capital program.

#### Digital equity and the Hot Spot circulation program

Internet access is a critical need for everything from job-seeking help to social connection to remote learning. The 2019 Levy is the primary funding source for The Library's [HotSpot program](#).

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

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



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

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

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

## **Expanding access to computers, scanners and more**

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

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

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

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

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

– Beacon Hill patron



## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SUPPORTING CHILDREN

### Expanding early learning options for children

#### Children's programming brings people into the Library

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

We currently offer weekly Play and Learn programs at Beacon Hill, Columbia, Delridge Lake City, NewHolly, Rainier Beach and South Park branches. Most programs are bilingual and are offered in English and Spanish, Chinese, Amharic or Somali. It often takes several months for groups to get established and the Library provides support by listing the groups in our events calendar and working with our partners to reach prioritized audiences, especially those who are not familiar with library services. This outreach pays off. Our newest group at NewHolly Branch, which offers Play and Learn activities in English and Somali, has been steadily gaining attendees since its launch last November. Roda Ahmed of East African Community Services, our community partner, reports, "We're witnessing a steady increase in participants each day, with Fridays now drawing in an impressive 15 to 20 kids ...The families and children who attend the program are absolutely delighted, leaving with smiles each week." Overall, we offered 78 Play and Learn sessions at seven Library branches in Q1 with a total attendance exceeding 1,800.



Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, Delridge Branch

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

Beyond in-person offerings, we continued to offer a robust menu of virtual programs through our [Kids' YouTube channel](#), including 177 different videos of story times, Play and Learn programs, Early Learning at Home programs, and children's activities online that are available to the public to enjoy at any time. Overall, our children's videos were viewed over 7,000 times. Our most popular video, first published in 2020, continues to be "What Firefighters Wear." This 4-minute video garnered over 4,000 views in Q1.

## LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: MAINTENANCE

### Protecting our investments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As you'll read in our 2024 second quarter report, our staff continue to adapt, enhance and launch services and programs to help our community respond to the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Here's a quick preview:

- 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Central Library
  - Spanish collection added to floating collections
  - Temporary closures due to staffing
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## 2024 Financials

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

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

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

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

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

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