

2024 Q2/Q3

The Seattle Public Library LEVY REPORT

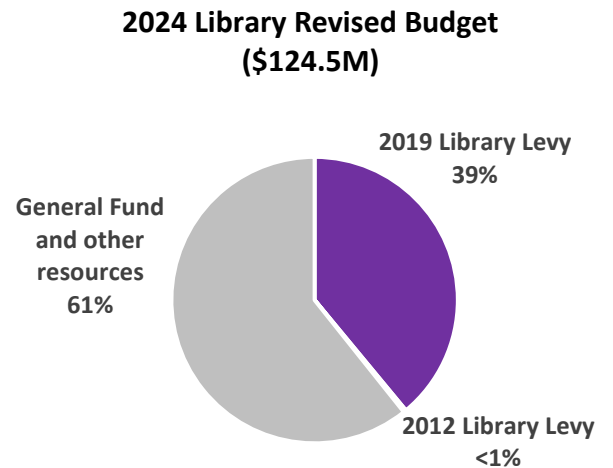


Recovering from ransomware attack, stabilizing hours

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 of carryover budget from prior years. Other sources including the City's general fund, state and federal grants, private funds and Library fund balance account for the remainder. Through Q3, the Library spent 47% of the revised budget from the 2019 Levy and 32% from the 2012 Levy. Underspensing was largely due to delays in implementing the major maintenance and technology capital programs.



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 and Q3 2024, continues the series of updates the Library has provided for the Board of Trustees and the public since 2013.

An unprecedented cybersecurity event

In our typical levy report, we report on one quarter at a time. Due to the significant impacts of a ransomware attack on the Library that occurred on Memorial Day and impacted operations through early September, we are reporting on Q2 and Q3 in a combined report. Below, we summarize the impacts of the event and our recovery, and you will see references to its impacts throughout the report.

Early on Saturday, May 25, our IT team discovered that the Library had experienced a ransomware attack. Ransomware is a type of malicious software, or malware, that prevents access to systems through encryption processes. The bad actors who conduct these criminal acts typically demand a ransom in return for restoration of systems.

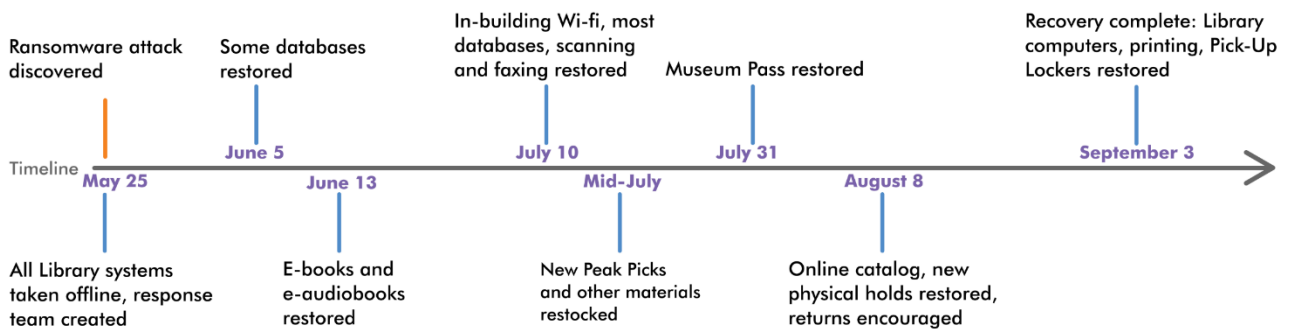
Over Memorial Day weekend, our IT team, with guidance from Library leadership, worked around the clock to contain the attack, which included taking most of our technology systems offline. We set up a cross-divisional response team with external cybersecurity consultants. We notified the Seattle Police Department and the FBI, and we remained in close communication with the City of Seattle throughout our response to this event. We then worked to develop communications for Library staff and patrons to help them understand the scale of this event and the impacts it would have on Library services.



Our IT team created a phased plan to securely restore the Library’s services and began executing it. Given recent high-profile ransomware attacks at other libraries, we anticipated a lengthy recovery. We were not fully back online until after Labor Day.

Throughout the event, all library buildings remained open, our in-person programs continued, and our staff provided extraordinary customer service while facing extraordinary limitations. For example, staff initially used a manual checkout system so that patrons could continue checking out physical materials.

Ransomware Recovery



They created lists of local resources, such as free printing, Wi-Fi and computer access that the Library could not provide during this time. They created new programs to engage patrons and help them discover materials during a time in which shelves were not being restocked and popular titles, such as Peak Picks, were being exhausted.

Impacts on our internal systems were significant. Our HR team, for example, because we were disconnected from the city’s payroll system, had to do payroll manually through several cycles, working long hours to make sure that staff could get paid on time. Our communications and marketing teams, without access to normal communications channels, such as a staff intranet and the Library’s public website, developed strategies for keeping patrons and staff informed, highlighting transparency and accountability. With limited access to our spl.org website for weeks, we communicated to patrons

through regular updates on our blog and social media channels. To communicate with our staff of 700, who had limited access to email and the internet, we used a combination of whiteboard updates (some called it the new intranet), print newsletters, and team meetings. We were also responding to many inquiries from the media and community members wanting to know more about the attack.

As our IT team worked to bring back services for patrons, they accelerated security upgrades for our staff and internal systems on a very ambitious timeline. (See the Technology Access section below for more details.)

The Library received strong support from city leaders and community members. Patrons kept their materials when we asked them to, and many responded enthusiastically as services were brought back online. Community members sent us hundreds of messages to let us know how much they valued not just Library services, but our staff and our spaces.

With the recovery process complete, we are working with a forensics specialists to investigate impacts to any personal data that may have been affected during the attack. We will notify individuals directly if we find this has occurred. We are also working with a consulting firm to conduct an after-action review of our response to this cybersecurity event that will bring further transparency to our response. We expect that to be completed by the end of 2024 and we will make it available publicly.

Other highlights: Celebrating newly air-conditioned branches and other milestones, stabilizing hours

In Q2 and Q3, while navigating an extremely disruptive cybersecurity event, the Library continued to do its best to meet our levy promises and be responsive to our community's needs. Here are a few highlights of accomplishments and challenges from April through September, 2024, which you will find detailed in more depth in this report.

Stabilizing open hours for patrons: At the start of Q2, the Library was participating in a citywide hiring freeze due to a projected 2025 budget deficit facing the City's General Fund. To navigate the impacts of reduced staffing levels, we reduced hours at most locations. In late June, we implemented a summer hours schedule to minimize unexpected closures and meet community need during the summer months, which included prioritizing access at larger locations equipped with air conditioning and at heavily used branches where in-building resources are in high demand. Between the beginning of April and the end of September, although we were scheduled to be open 13% fewer hours than in Q1, the Library was able to stabilize operations and significantly reduce unexpected closures. In late



While offline, we delivered print newsletters to Library staff twice a week.

September, we implemented a new fall hours schedule that increased open hours by 6% and began planning for a significant increase in hours in late January 2025 that would bring us above 2019 levels and closer to our levy promises.

More libraries now equipped with air conditioning: Thanks to the 2019 levy and other funding sources, two additional branches offered air conditioning to patrons during the summer of 2024, the Southwest Branch and the Northeast Branch. With the reopening of the Green Lake Branch, 22 out of 27 locations will offer air conditioning. In August 2024, the Mayor's Office announced a new FEMA grant that will bring air conditioning to the final branches without it.

New types of social services programs. During a time in which key technology services for our most vulnerable populations were not available, our Social Services team, supported in part by levy funds, piloted new programs to help patrons meet basic needs and find connections. We held our first-ever Young Adult Resource Fair (YARF) at the Central Library, which featured local social service providers and community organizations for young people, as well as a Lake City Resource Fair, partnering with North Helpline and Lake City community advocates.

20 years of the Central Library: In May 2024, we celebrated a significant milestone, the 20th Anniversary of the Central Library. The iconic glass-and-steel library, which first opened its doors to 25,000 people, on May 23, 2004, is still visited by 1,500 people a day. It has earned its reputation as a beloved landmark not just for its design, but as a literary and artistic home for Seattle, and a neighborhood library branch for those who live and work downtown.

Progress on a strategic plan: Our progress on finalizing and rolling out a new strategic plan was delayed while the Library focused on recovery from the cyberattack. Informed by the participation of dozens of community organizations, the plan aims to help us build organizational resiliency and navigate a range of 21st century challenges, while seeking to improve community outcomes, particularly for vulnerable people and marginalized communities; and champion belonging and inclusion. It also lays the groundwork for the development of a 2026 Library Levy proposal. A final copy is expected to go to the Library Board of Trustees for their consideration in mid-November.

The remainder of this report provides more detail about how 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.

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.

Operating challenges in implementing expanded hours continue

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. By mid-March 2020, however, the Library shut its doors completely in response to the pandemic and it took several years to rebuild staffing capacity, both in number and position type, to begin expanding hours to fulfill our levy promises. The Library spent much of 2021 reopening all locations and 2022 stabilizing staffing and open hours.

In 2022, we hired over 160 new staff to meet and exceed pre-pandemic open hours and expanded hours in 2023. In Q1 2024, we were open nearly 18,000 hours, 7% more than in 2019. The additional open hours increased community access to Library collections, information services, computers, printers, programming and public spaces. However, by the end of Q1, we began to experience a high number of vacancies due to a hiring freeze. The Library, a non-executive City of Seattle department with authority to authorize its own hiring policies, implemented a hiring freeze in January 2024 in tandem with a citywide hiring freeze to address 2025 budget challenges anticipated by the City.

By March 2024, we were experiencing a staffing shortage that was leading 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 late June, we implemented a summer hours schedule that shifted the open hours of some branches without air conditioning to earlier in the day when temperatures were cooler to minimize heat-related closures, and made other adjustments to meet community need in the summer months. Between middle of April through the end of September, although we were open less than in Q1, the Library was able to stabilize operations and significantly reduce unexpected closure days compared to the end of March and the beginning of April.

As we worked to address potential 2025 budget challenges with the City of Seattle, we were able to once again begin hiring staff to build back our open hours. In late September, we implemented a new fall hours schedule that increased the number of open hours systemwide by 6%, from 1,283 hours per week to 1,360 hours per week. When the Green Lake Branch reopens in Q4 2024, the Library will be operating at 99% of our 2019 hours. To bring us above that baseline and closer to our levy promises of added hours, we also began planning for a significant increase in hours in late January 2025.

Reducing barriers to Library services

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

When our systems were taken offline in May 2024, we continued checking out physical materials to patrons in library locations, initially using handwritten paper forms, and moving to checkout spreadsheets in Excel when this became secure. We encouraged patrons to keep their materials until further notice and extended all patron due dates until we were able to restore access to our check-in and processing/sorting systems. We also simplified our “claims returned” process to address possible discrepancies in accounts as a result of incident-related data loss. We worked with digital resource vendors to restore access to each digital platform as quickly as possible. Some resources such as Kanopy were restored almost immediately, and access to e-books and e-audiobooks through OverDrive/Libby, was restored less than three weeks after the incident.

We also actively promoted our resources once they were available again. This year's Library Card Sign-up Month coincided with final services coming back online from the cybersecurity event. This inspired our theme, “Welcome Back to Your Library,” which encourages patrons to explore everything they missed -- and discover new-to-them programs and services. It also included an interactive component: Branches put up posters asking “What do you love about Your Library?” and encouraged patrons to write their responses on sticky notes. We received hundreds of comments and kudos.



In-person and virtual programs and services

During a time when many of our technology systems were offline, the Library's in-person programming continued mostly without interruption, playing an important role in keeping our communities connected to the Library, each other and our resources.

In some cases, staff added programs to support patrons, such as toddler story times, movie screenings, and community engagement activities. One branch created a "1980s time travel adventure," and a Central Library reference librarian brought out a vintage typewriter to type responses to patron inquiries.



A Homework Help volunteer tutor works with a student.

During the school year, Homework Help, held at nine branches, continued to be an important program for K-12 students, although students were affected by the lack of Wi-Fi access during the outage. In Q2, we offered 189 Homework Help sessions, with attendance exceeding 1,750. Homework Help restarted in mid-September for the 2024-25 school year and by the month's end, over 475 students had attended 43 Homework Help sessions.

The Central Library hosted 92 public events during Q2 and Q3, including the 20th anniversary celebration of the Central Library in May. Highlights of the celebration included public tours, a display on Level 3 and a special event with Lara Swimmer, Central Library photographer and author of "Reading Room: New and Reimagined Libraries of the American West." The milestone was covered by several media outlets including the Seattle Channel, which produced a [short feature story](#).

In September, the Library hosted the first naturalization ceremony at the Central Library auditorium since 2019. Thirty eligible candidates took the Oath of Allegiance and became United States citizens in front of family and friends. Another highlight was an exhibit at the Central Library's Level 8 Gallery honoring Seattle Gay News' 50th anniversary.

"Parable of the Sower" by Octavia Butler was the Library's [Seattle Reads](#) selection for 2024. Because Butler was a writer with deep local roots and global influence, Seattle Reads collaborated with community partners across the city on programs related to "Parable," including book discussions, panels and performances. A kickoff event attended by 75 people was held at the Douglass-Truth branch on May 2. Four additional book discussions were held at Library branches during May and June. Additional events



inspired by Butler’s work were held at community locations such as Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute, ARTE NOIRE and Wa Na Wari, as well as some held virtually.

In-house Social Services team: Resource fairs and more

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 services 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.

“You’ve gone above and beyond. The number of people you serve, and the things you do for us – we appreciate you being here.”

- Patron receiving support from Social Services Team

During Q2 and Q3, the Social Services Team recorded 480 interactions with patrons, most of which involved one or more referrals to external resources such as shelter, housing, and legal assistance. The Library continued to offer “Coffee & Conversations” at the Central Library every other week, drawing 600 participants to 14 events. Weekly Young Adult Drop-ins, co-hosted by Children & Teen Services and Social Services, drew more than 100 young adults, several of whom the team assisted with accessing shelter and other supportive services. One participant said, “This is what I have to look forward to every Friday. The shelter doesn’t open until 9 p.m.” Thirty-five people attend three social services drop-in programs at the International District Chinatown Branch.

On July 23, the Social Services Team collaborated with the Children & Teen Services and Youth & Family Learning Services teams to hold the Library’s first Young Adult Resource Fair at the Central Library, which drew 250 attendees. The fair brought together social services providers and community organizations serving young people, including shelters, medical providers, employment resources, pet care, and more. Attendees also took photos at the Youth in Focus photo booth, created zines and other art projects, “shopped” for clothes a clothing closet, and received care from a foot clinic. Rapid Relief Team’s mobile kitchen



Young Adult Resource Fair, Central Library, July 2024

cooked and served 500 burgers during the event. One attendee said, “I have never seen a library do so much!”

In August, the team worked with the North Helpline and Lake City community advocates to host the first Lake City Resource Fair inside and outside the Lake City Branch, which drew around 300 attendees, including many families and young children. In addition to highlighting neighborhood resources, the fair allowed attendees to access services that aren’t usually available in the Lake City neighborhood such as DOL2Go, the State’s mobile ID and driver’s licensing unit and the mobile medical van.

The team also collaborated with branch staff and FareStart to launch a weekly [Mobile Market](#) on the plaza of the NewHolly Branch, bringing fresh produce to the neighborhood. Patrons can receive a free \$25 voucher from the Library to redeem at the market and can also shop using [SNAP/Washington Food Assistance Program](#) benefits. In the first four weeks, the market served 92 households.



Fare Start Mobile Market, NewHolly Plaza

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 heavily used despite changes in hold policies and service interruption

Although digital books continued to be very popular with our patrons, OverDrive users and checkouts in Q2 and Q3 declined compared to recent quarters. This decline was likely due to two factors: the recent changes we implemented in our holds policies and the cyberattack that interrupted access to OverDrive in late May to mid-June.

In mid-March, the Library reduced the maximum number of holds allowed for OverDrive from 25 to 10 at one time to manage escalating costs of digital books and meet patron demand for a diverse selection of digital books all year.

From May 25 to June 12, OverDrive was offline entirely in response to the cyberattack. We restored access on June 13, and patrons could once again check out e-books and place holds through OverDrive, a relatively quick recovery compared to many of our services and one that was celebrated by patrons. As one commenter said, “Wonderful news! Thank you for the continued communication through what has to be an incredibly challenging time for everyone at SPL.” Full access was restored on July 26, when the Library could again purchase new content and additional copies.

Checkouts of digital books showed remarkable resilience despite these factors. Q2 was the first quarter since late 2022 that showed a decline in digital book checkouts and users. Patrons still checked out over 1.1 million items in Q2 and 1.3 million items in Q3.

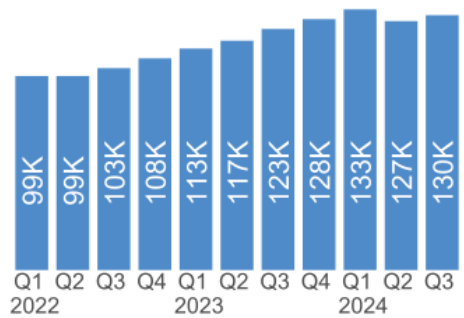
To help patrons discover titles and to amplify underrepresented voices we regularly create curated reading lists in OverDrive and promote them to patrons. At a time when the number of holds were reduced and service was interrupted, these readings lists were especially helpful in directing patrons towards e-books and e-audiobooks that were immediately available for checkout. Q3 curated lists promoted a wide variety of content, from legends, myths, fables and fairy tales retold for adults to cookbooks for grilling and the outdoors and fiction and nonfiction books that share a common theme.

Investments in digital materials

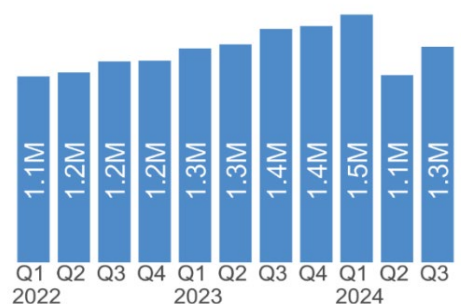
Recent changes we made to manage costs for digital books, including the new holds limit and a higher holds-to-copies ratio, show early signs of success. We purchased more digital titles (28,000) and fewer copies (48,000) during Q2 and Q3 2024 compared to the same period in 2023 (20,000 titles and 58,000 copies). This was due both to changes to our purchasing policies and our inability to purchase any content from late May through late June. When we resumed purchasing in late June, we ordered many titles we had missed in the prior weeks, but we did not need to buy as many additional copies to fulfill holds.

In Q2 and Q3, levy funds were used to expand the Library’s World Languages e-book and e-audiobook collection. We purchased 380 titles for adults and 299 titles for children in 11

Count of patrons who checked out e-books



Count of e-book checkouts

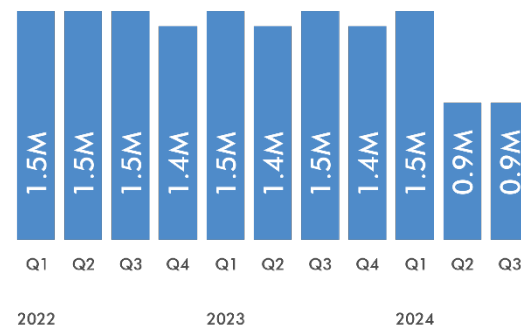


languages available in OverDrive (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese). Highlights include “The Swimmer,” the 2023 Seattle Reads selection by Julie Otsuka, in several languages and e-audiobook editions of children’s titles including “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” in Spanish; “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets” in Chinese; and Volume 1 of the “Keeper of the Lost Cities” series in French.

Investments in physical materials

The levy funds the breadth and depth of the physical collection as well as supports getting materials to patrons faster. Physical book circulation has been steady the past couple of years, but it was also affected by the cybersecurity attack. In Q2 and Q3, patrons checked out more than 1.7 million physical items (including renewals) compared to the 2.9 million items that were checked out in Q2 and Q3 of 2023. Although patrons could still check out physical materials available on the shelves, we did not add new titles for over two months, and asked patrons to keep their checkouts. Staff took extra measures to help patrons find on-shelf books and discover new titles during the time when the catalog was inaccessible.

Count of physical checkouts and renewals



[Peak Picks](#), the Library’s signature no-holds, no-wait collection of high-interest titles, was especially affected. From the end of May until the middle of July, existing Peak Picks titles were almost completely checked out, leaving the Peak Pick displays bare. Over 40,000 Peak Picks were checked out by 16,000 patrons in Q2 and Q3, compared to 74,000 Peak Picks checked out by 22,000 patrons during the same period in 2023. The Library ordered 30 Peak Picks titles in the second quarter, but only 20 went out before all systems were taken offline; the remaining 10 titles were among the first books made available to patrons once we were able to process materials again. In good news, Peak Picks also reached a significant milestone in Q2, with one million checkouts since it started in 2017.



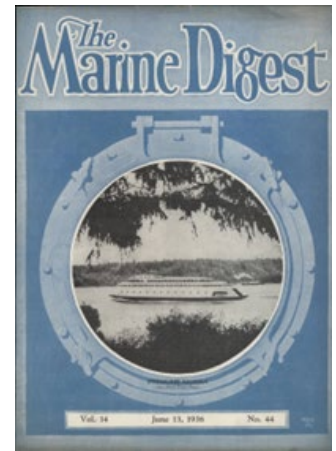
The Library used this image on social media to announce the return of new Peak Picks.

The cybersecurity event also impacted orders for new titles, and only 21 Peak Picks titles were added in the third quarter. Nonfiction highlights included “The Backyard Bird Chronicles,” by novelist Amy Tan; “Rebel Girl” by musician and riot grrrl

movement founder Kathleen Hanna; "Knife," Salman Rushdie's deeply personal account of surviving an assassination attempt; "Autocracy Inc.," Pulitzer Prize winner Anne Applebaum's alarming account of how autocracies work together to undermine the world; and "Lovely One," a memoir by Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown-Jackson. Fiction highlights include the 2024 Seattle Reads title, "Parable of the Sower," by Octavia Butler originally published in 1993; Kalliane Bradley's debut, "The Ministry of Time"; Rachel Kushner's Booker Prize and National Book Award-nominated latest, "Creation Lake"; and Louise Erdrich's masterwork "The Mighty Red."

More local history online and in the Seattle Room

The levy funds support the Seattle Collection by funding the Seattle Room curator and digital librarian. In Q2, we made over 1,500 issues of the Seattle-based "[Marine Digest](#)" available in our Seattle Room Digital Collections. The magazine, founded in 1922 by Jackson B. Corbet as a resource for local maritime news, provides important documentation of a core local industry. News coverage includes regional news on maritime topics, domestic and international trade updates and information about ships and shipping companies. The collection currently includes issues from 1922 through 1954 and is fully text searchable. We will eventually digitize the full back-run of this publication (through 2008). We are grateful to Mike Daigle and the Northwest Publishing Center for donating a physical set of back issues and for providing permission to digitize the collection.



In Q2, the Seattle Room curator continued to prioritize the purchase of material documenting Seattle's Black community. Highlights include a 1971 photo of Doug Barnett, founder of Black Arts West Theatre; a 1990 photo featuring Mayor Norm Rice at Seattle's "Back Home Banquet for Brothers," attended by 1,000 Black men supporting youth mentorships; and a photo of Rex Jones, Seattle's Urban League's Associate Director of Employment, shown with applicants for the League's Skills Bank program.



An important Q3 acquisition was a photograph of Werner Lenggenhager (1899-1988), the Swiss immigrant, Boeing employee and photographer who created a photographic record of Seattle's architecture, monuments and scenery. Over the course of his life, Lenggenhager gave nearly 30,000 prints of his photographs to The Seattle Public Library. The Library has digitized over 4,800 of Lenggenhager's photographs, which are available in the Werner Lenggenhager Photograph Collection.

"Some persons contribute time to charitable causes. My pictures are my small contribution to the city."

- Werner Lenggenhager, 1955

In Q3, without tools to digitize documents for much of the quarter, we focused our attention on physical processing of archival collections. We reboxed collections into acid-free boxes and folders, organizing materials and describing them in finding aids. We also completed processing for several collections, including the [Seattle Room church and religious ephemera collection, 1880-2021](#), the [Seattle Room labor union ephemera collection, circa 1900s-2000s](#), the [Ernest H. Keene theater magazines and programs, circa 1917-1960s](#), the [Capitol Hill Seafair parade float collection, circa 1959-1961](#) and the [McChord Air Force Base photographs, circa 1940s](#).

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, which includes updating and replacing the Integrated Library System (ILS).

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 the Library's [HotSpot program](#), which continues to provide mobile internet access through our general collection and through targeted outreach with key community organizations. In Q2, the 850 hotspots in our general collection were checked out 1,245 times. In Q3, these items were checked out 614 times. During the technology outage, we redirected 60 Wi-Fi hotspots to connect our staff to the internet.

"Sure glad we have Wi-Fi. Cool how the Library cares about community."

- Nickelsville resident

In Q2, our Outreach Team was limited in its ability to loan hotspots due to impacts of the cyberattack. But while we only recorded 27 new loans, we extended lending periods whenever possible to ensure our partners had reliable coverage. In Q3, as the Library restored services, we were able to loan 124 outreach hotspots. Our partners and patrons expressed their relief and appreciation for the restoration of library resources.

In Q3, we also established a new partnership with the Seattle World School Scholarship and Mentorship Program, an organization that helps refugee and immigrant students transition from high school to college or vocational training. In September, the Library loaned 14 hotspots to the Seattle World School Scholarship and Mentorship Program through the end of the school year in June 2025.

During Q2 and Q3, Library staff connected with program participants at classes, meetings and celebrations. They visited Nickelsville residents at their Central District and Northlake locations, met with Spanish-speaking program participants at Casa Latina and Villa Comunitaria and helped coordinate an end-of-summer party at Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) Village. These events provide Library staff opportunities to learn more about the communities they work with and share information about library resources.

“Thank you to the technical team who have done some heavy lifting to get you all back up and running after the cyberattack. Job well done!”

- LIHI Community Advisory Committee Member

Ransomware disruptions in technology access, building more secure systems

Patrons’ access to technology services was significantly disrupted by the ransomware attack. For several months afterwards, our IT team’s main priority was to secure and restore our systems and rebuild them when necessary. In the days after the attack, working with cybersecurity consultants, our IT team worked around the clock to take the Library’s internal and public-facing systems offline, secure them, and create a phased recovery plan for restoring services and internal systems.

Key recovery milestones included restoring access to e-books and e-audiobooks through OverDrive in mid June; access to in-building Wi-Fi, a range of databases and scanning and faxing on July 10; and restoration of the online catalog on August 8, which allowed patrons to once again place holds. The day after Labor Day, Sept. 3, we restored public computers, printers, Pick-Up Lockers, and the Suggest a Title form, which meant that the recovery was almost fully complete. Moving forward, the Library is continuing to improve our overall security posture with new or expanded capabilities and the addition of a new full-time cybersecurity analyst position.

“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

Use of public computers and printing predictably declined from late May through September because of the outages. In Q2, 17,000 patrons printed 311,000 pages, a decline of 18% and 27%, respectively, compared to Q2 2023, and in Q3, 17,700 users printed 287,000 pages, a decline of 20% and 34% compared to Q3 2023. Computer use saw similar declines, with usage

decreasing by 33% in Q2 and 69% in Q3 compared to 2023. Scan EZ use also declined significantly. To help patrons find alternatives, staff created lists of nearby resources (even drawing maps on occasion!). The impact of the outages highlighted the Library's essential and unique role in providing free technology services for many in our community, who rely on computers, Wi-Fi and printing for everything from job applications to entertainment.

As part of our recovery work, the IT team also drastically accelerated its timeline for rebuilding our internal systems to make them more modern and secure. Early in the recovery process, they accelerated implementation of multifactor authentication for all staff, and reset all passwords. This work occurred in just three days, rather than the weeks-long timeline they had planned prior to the cyberattack. IT also accelerated the Library's shift to Microsoft 365's (M365) cloud-based platforms; constructed an entirely new intranet; and re-imaged all public and staff computers, including installing the latest version of the Microsoft 365 suite, with help from Seattle IT.

Because of the cyberattack, progress on the development of a new mobile app to increase access to the Library system, enhance the online patron experience and attract new audiences was delayed. Just before the cyberattack, Library staff tried out the demo apps provided by the two finalists from our vendor selection process. The project was paused but started up again in Q3 with work by AnthroTech, a human-centered usability design and testing firm, to further assess the finalist demo apps. After conducting their own expert usability and accessibility review, they invited patrons to test the apps during several sessions at the Douglass-Truth and Lake City branches in September. In selecting patrons for usability testing, we prioritized people with disabilities and communities most impacted by the digital divide, including communities of color, seniors, low-income and limited proficiency or non-English speaking communities. We anticipate selecting a vendor in Q4 and anticipate the app will be launched in Q1 or Q2 2025.

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. In Q2 and Q3, during the time in which our technology services were unavailable, our early learning programs continued uninterrupted, providing an important point of engagement and support for families.

A key early learning program supported by the levy is Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, drop-in neighborhood-based play groups for the Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregiver (FFN)

community. Early childhood educators facilitate weekly 90-minute sessions at seven branches, which are available to 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, which 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.

We currently offer weekly Play and Learn programs at the Beacon Hill, Columbia, Delridge, Lake City, NewHolly, Rainier Beach and South Park branches. In Q2 and Q3, 148 levy-funded Play and Learn sessions were held at these branches, with attendance of over 4,100. Most programs operate year round, except for the groups at the Delridge and South Park branches, which operate on the Seattle Public Schools calendar. Most programs are bilingual and are offered in English and Spanish, Chinese, Amharic or Somali.

The sessions are highly valued by parents and caregivers. In June, participants in a Play and Learn focus group conducted by our partner Denise Louie Education Center, said that the programs give their children additional social skills (especially sharing) and more exposure to spoken language. Parents and caregivers at the Play and Learn sessions at South Park and Delridge branches (which are conducted in Spanish and English) have been especially appreciative of the support provided to help understand children’s language development in a bilingual environment.



Play and Learn session at Lake City Branch

To further support Play and Learn, 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.

In Q2 and Q3, the Library also led more than 450 story times in 22 locations both in our libraries and at other community locations, with attendance of over 16,400. Our offerings included world language story times in Spanish and Arabic and a perennial patron favorite, Firefighter Story Time which we offered at 14 branches in Q2 and Q3.

We continued to offer a robust menu of virtual programs through our [Kids’ YouTube channel](#), including 165 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 10,000 times between April and September. Our most popular video, first published in 2020, continues to be “What Firefighters Wear.” This 4-minute video garnered nearly 4,800 views in Q2 and Q3.

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 \$17.3 million, including \$12 million in carryover funds to support major maintenance and seismic work. The 2012 levy provides an additional \$250,000 in carryover funds in 2024.

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 between April and September, completing more than 2,500 work orders, despite being understaffed due to the limitations on hiring. The janitorial/custodial team completed 700 work orders. In addition to their daily job duties, our janitorial/custodial staff regularly pressure washed the plazas at the Central Library and conducted frequent additional restroom cleanings.

The facilities team completed over 1,800 works orders in Q2 and Q3, 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. The Library spent nearly \$1.5 million in Q2 and \$649,000 in Q3 of 2019 levy funds on seismic and major maintenance work, for a total of \$4.18 million year-to-date.

During Q3, we began preparing for a major capital improvement milestone: the reopening of the historic Green Lake Branch after a 20-month seismic retrofit project funded primarily by the levy. In addition to the retrofit, the renovation included the addition of 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; the addition of study rooms and a

community gallery; and other interior changes to provide more usable space for patrons. The reopening was planned for late October.

In Q2 and Q3, we made progress on our efforts to add modern HVAC systems to all locations, which will increase the Library's ability to serve as a refuge from heat and wildfire smoke and reduce our carbon footprint. The Library continued to make final adjustments to the 2023 Capitol Hill HVAC/electrification project and expects to complete this work in Q4. Once the Capitol Hill HVAC/electrification project is completed and the Green Lake Branch reopens, 22 of 27 SPL locations will offer air-conditioned public spaces. A significant upgrade of the Central Library's HVAC system, which needed chiller repairs in Q2 to maintain cooling this past summer, is on the horizon for 2025 and beyond.

In late August, the Mayor's Office and the Library jointly announced that the Library was awarded a [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) Hazardous Mitigation Grant](#), which will provide partial funding for priority HVAC/electrification projects (including the Columbia, Fremont, Queen Anne, University and West Seattle branches). The \$5.2 million FEMA grant covers only part of the cost of each project, so timing of those projects is contingent upon supplemental funding decisions.

The University Branch seismic retrofit project was publicly bid in Q3 with bids due in late October. The branch is tentatively scheduled to close for construction during Q1 2025. 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 technical expertise, which can be beyond current Library staff capacity. Timeliness of funding decisions, especially at the federal level, varies and depends upon political factors beyond the Library's control. Without adequate federal and state grants or other city or private funding, we are likely to have insufficient resources to undertake the third seismic project (the Columbia Branch) planned in the 2019 levy.



Patron enjoying newly air-conditioned Northeast Branch on the hottest day of the summer.

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead:

As you'll read in our year-end report, our staff continue to adapt, enhance and launch services and programs to help our communities respond to the challenges they face. Here's a quick preview:

- 2024-2033 Strategic Plan Adoption
 - Cyber Security Event After Action Report
 - Green Lake Branch project complete and branch reopened
 - App Vendor Selection
-

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 \$23 million in funds from the 2019 Levy and \$0.1 million in funds from the 2012 Levy through Q3. Through Q3, the Library spent 47% of the revised budget from the 2019 Levy and 32% 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. Due to a reporting lag caused by the citywide migration to the Workday payroll system, labor costs for two pay periods in September are not reported in the year-to-date numbers reflected below. When these costs are loaded into the financial system, they will be reflected in the appropriate accounting period.

2019 Levy	Operations Plan	Revised Budget	YTD Expenditures	Available	% Spent
Hours & Access	13,692,000	13,818,277	9,977,201	3,841,076	72%
Providing Books & Materials	5,931,000	5,870,749	4,126,443	1,744,307	70%
Technology & Online Services	2,670,000	2,608,499	1,673,568	934,931	64%
Literacy & Early Learning	381,000	390,396	260,266	130,131	67%
Building & Facility Support	1,947,000	2,015,011	1,168,415	846,596	58%
Administration	573,000	578,566	346,067	232,500	60%
CIP	5,859,000	23,520,884	5,402,326	18,118,559	23%
Total	31,053,000	48,802,384	22,954,285	25,848,099	47%

2012 Levy	Revised Budget	YTD Expenditures	Available	% Spent
Technology & Online Services	98,932	98,932	-	100%
Routine Maintenance	9,250	9,250	-	100%
CIP	254,878	8,224	246,655	3%
Total	363,060	116,405	246,655	32%

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

Location	2019	Jan 1- Mar 4, 2024	Mar 5 -Apr 11, 2024	Apr. 12 -Jun 18, 2024	Jun 19 -Sep 24, 2024	Sep 25 - Dec 31, 2024
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	40
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	1,377	1,416	1,468	1,282	1,283	1,360
Hours as a % of 2019 baseline		103%	107%	93%	93%	99%

* Green Lake Branch re-opens Oct. 28, 2024