

The Seattle Public Library

Library Levy Background

March 11, 2026

www.spl.org/Levy

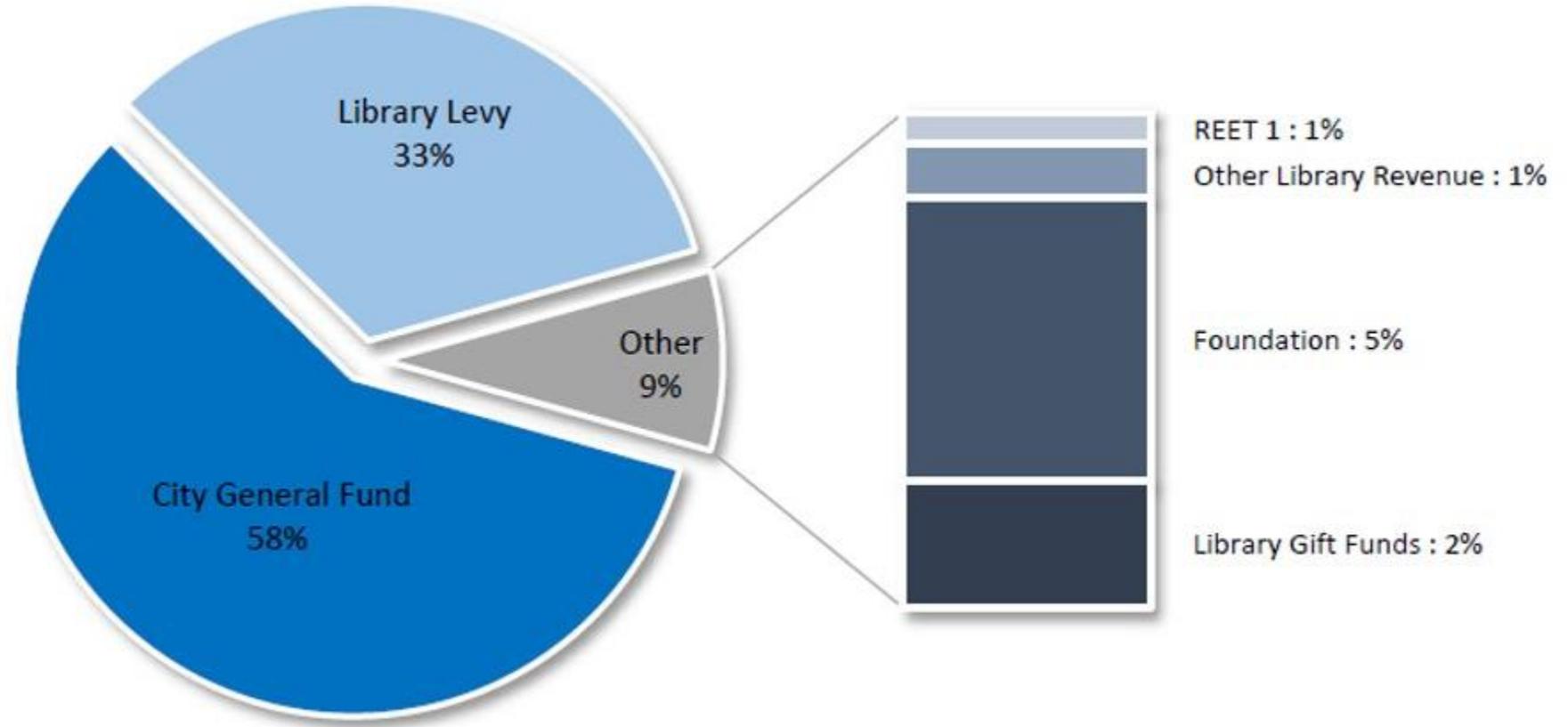
2026 Library Budget

Operating budget \$102.5M

- \$35.7M from levy

Capital budget \$2.6M

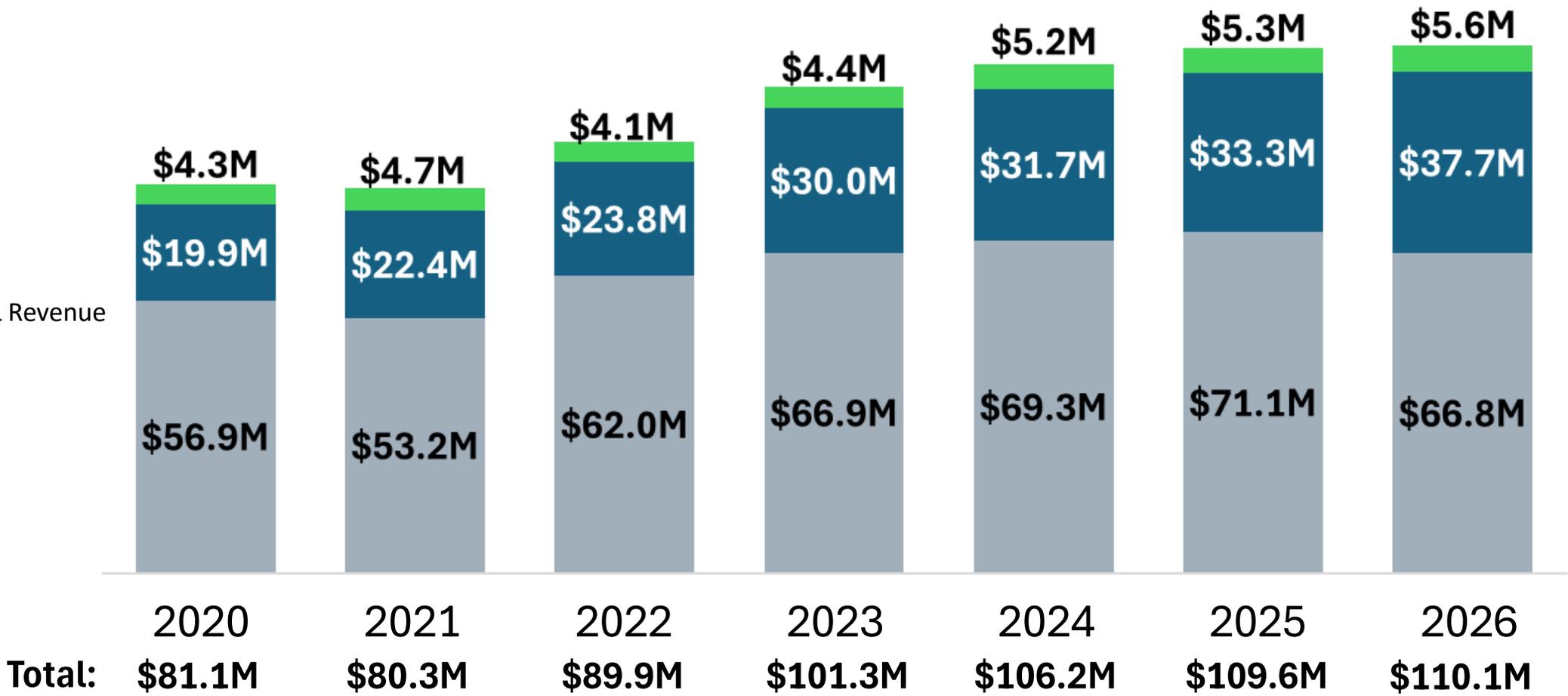
- \$2.0M from levy
- \$605k from REET





Library Budget: By Funding Source

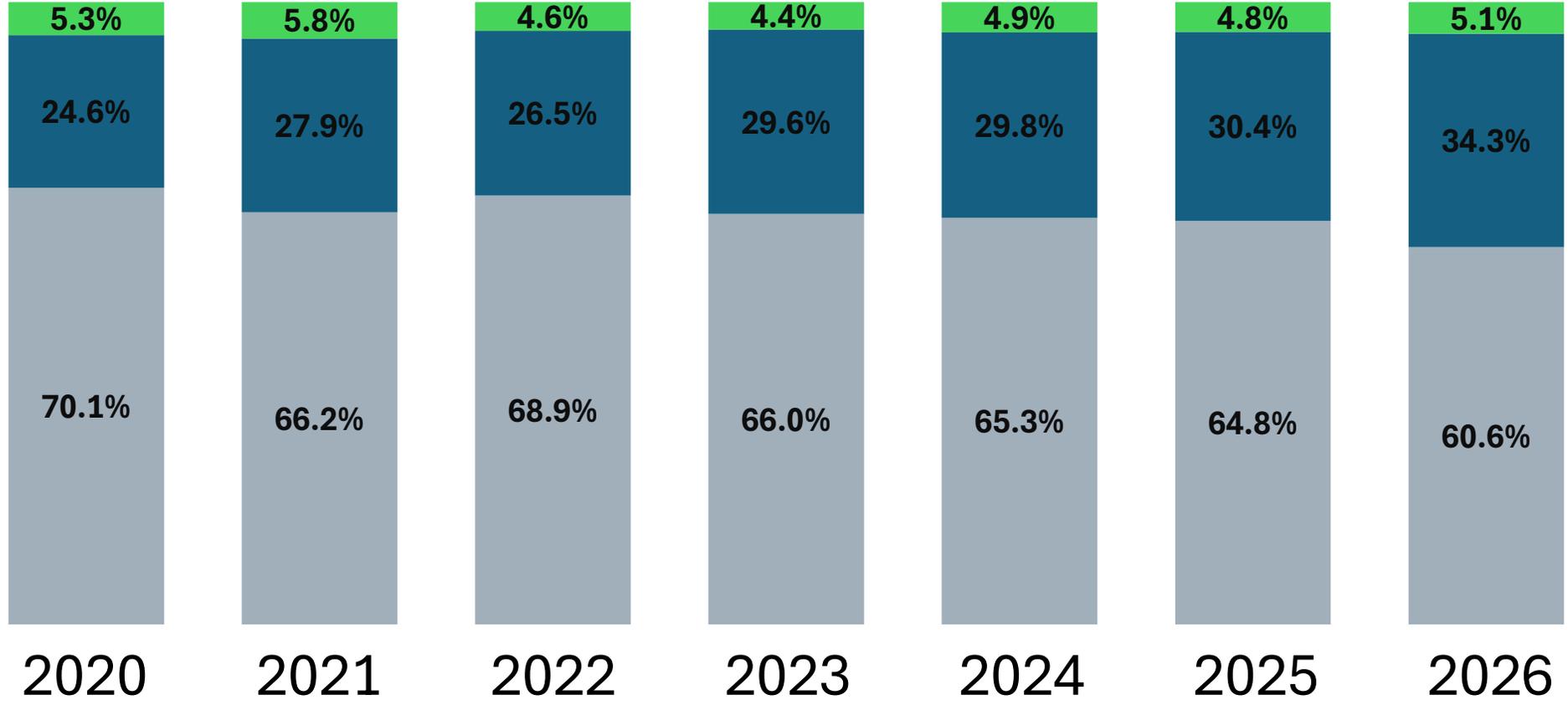
- SPLF/Private
- 2019 Library Levy
- General Fund + SPL Revenue





Annual Levy Funding: Funding Source by Percentage

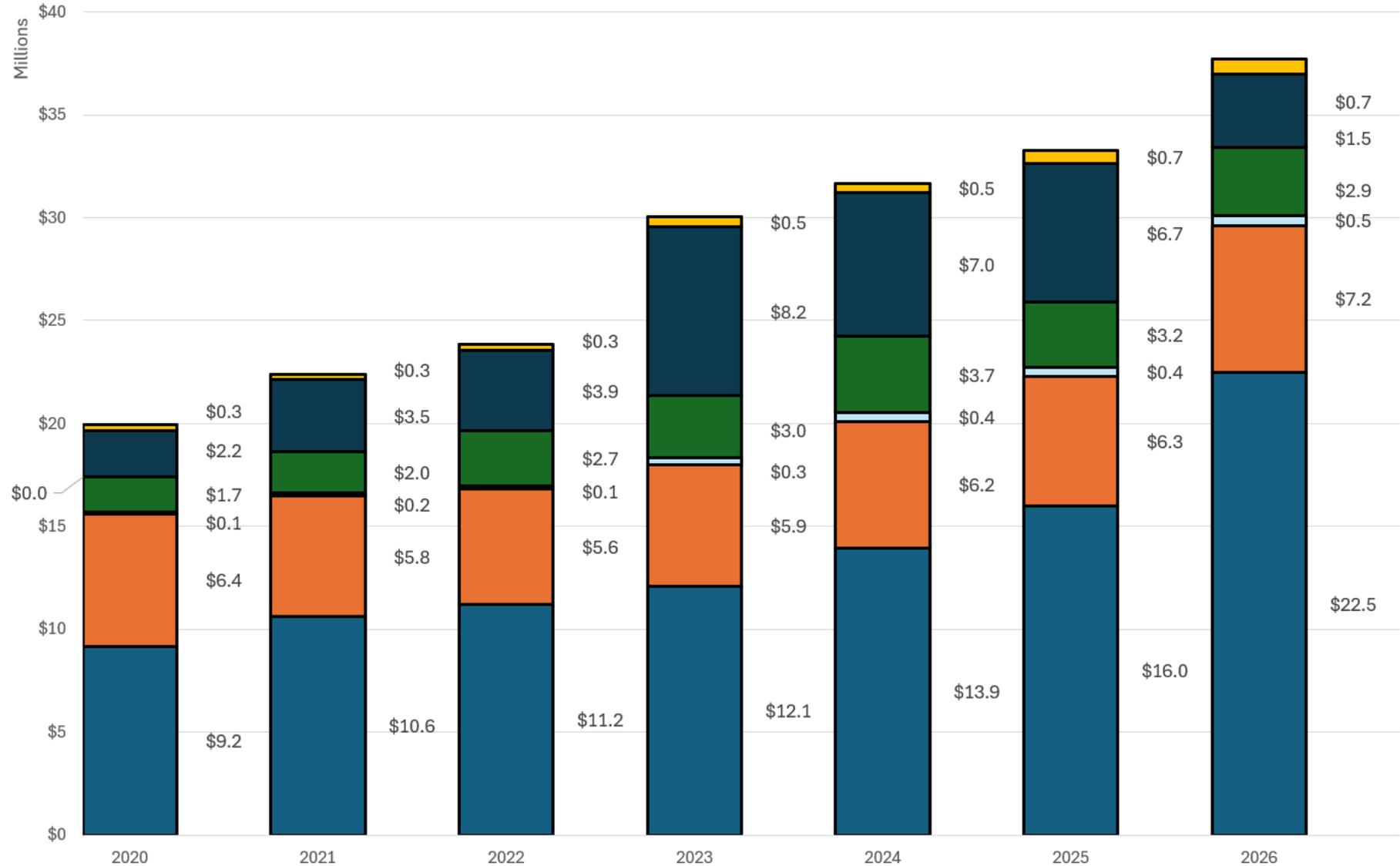
- SPLF/Private
- 2019 Library Levy
- General Fund + SPL Revenue





Annual Levy Funding: **By Category**

- Administration & Central Costs
- Building Maintenance
- Technology & Online Services
- Helping Children
- Books & Materials
- Hours & Access



Accomplishments

Collections: Books & Materials



Overview

COLLECTIONS

Physical & digital books

- E-books & e-audiobooks
- For all ages, interests and viewpoints

Physical & digital history items

- Photos, maps, postcards, menus, & more

Unique collections

- LGBTQ+, African American, Aviation, Zines, and other curated collections

DVDs & CDs

Physical & digital magazines, newspapers

- Free access to New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal & magazines

Streaming music, movies & TV

- Hoopla & Kanopy



Highlights

COLLECTIONS

Top 10 largest e-circulation library in the world

- E-book checkouts have nearly doubled since 2019
- Driven by Seattle readers = increased demand

Grew collections

- From 2.4M to 2.9M items since 2019
- Digital items, Peak Picks, Special Collections

Increased language access throughout system

- Spanish collection at all locations
- Added Dari, Pashto, Portuguese and Ukrainian language collections
- More translated communications

Increased access to local history

- Grew digital history collection to 33,000 items



Spending by Funding Source

Books & materials, acquisitions, processing, material distribution

COLLECTIONS

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 budgeted
General Fund	\$11.34M	\$11.16M	\$12.88M	\$13.4M	\$13.19M	\$13.39M	<i>\$14.56M</i>
Library Levy	\$6.42M	\$5.83M	\$5.56M	\$5.87M	\$6.16M	\$6.32M	<i>\$7.15M</i>
Private Funds	\$2.21M	\$1.75M	\$1.58M	\$1.98M	\$1.95M	\$2.13M	<i>\$2.34M</i>

Accomplishments

Building Maintenance



Overview

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Major Maintenance

- Renovations, seismic retrofits, ADA improvements, HVAC replacements, reroofing, etc.

Routine & Scheduled Maintenance

- Provide support for 27 public locations & 1 maintenance and operations center
- Landscaping, janitorial/custodial, building system and controls, etc.

Repairs

- Unplanned maintenance, graffiti, broken windows, etc.



Highlights

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Improved public safety & accessibility

- Seismic retrofit and remodels
- Green Lake Branch complete in 2025
- University Branch to be complete in 2026
- ADA improvements (restrooms, entrances, elevators, etc.)

Increased climate resiliency

- Green Lake Branch = LEED® Gold-certified
- Electrification – transitioning away from fossil fuels
 - e.g. converting gas to electric heat pumps
- Air conditioning now at 22 locations

Maintained buildings

- Major maintenance (i.e. Greenwood Branch reroofing)
- Routine and preventative maintenance



Spending by Funding Source

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
General Fund	\$6.36M	\$6.53M	\$7.32M	\$10.18M	\$6.87M	\$9.70M
Library Levy	\$2.24M	\$3.50M	\$4.30M	\$9.02M	\$7.70M	\$6.74M
Private Funds	\$0.04M	\$0.09M	\$0.28M	\$0.09M	\$0.78M	\$0.03M

Accomplishments

Technology & Online Services



Overview

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Public & staff technology

- Computers, printers, laptops, self-checkout stations, catalog stations

Internet access

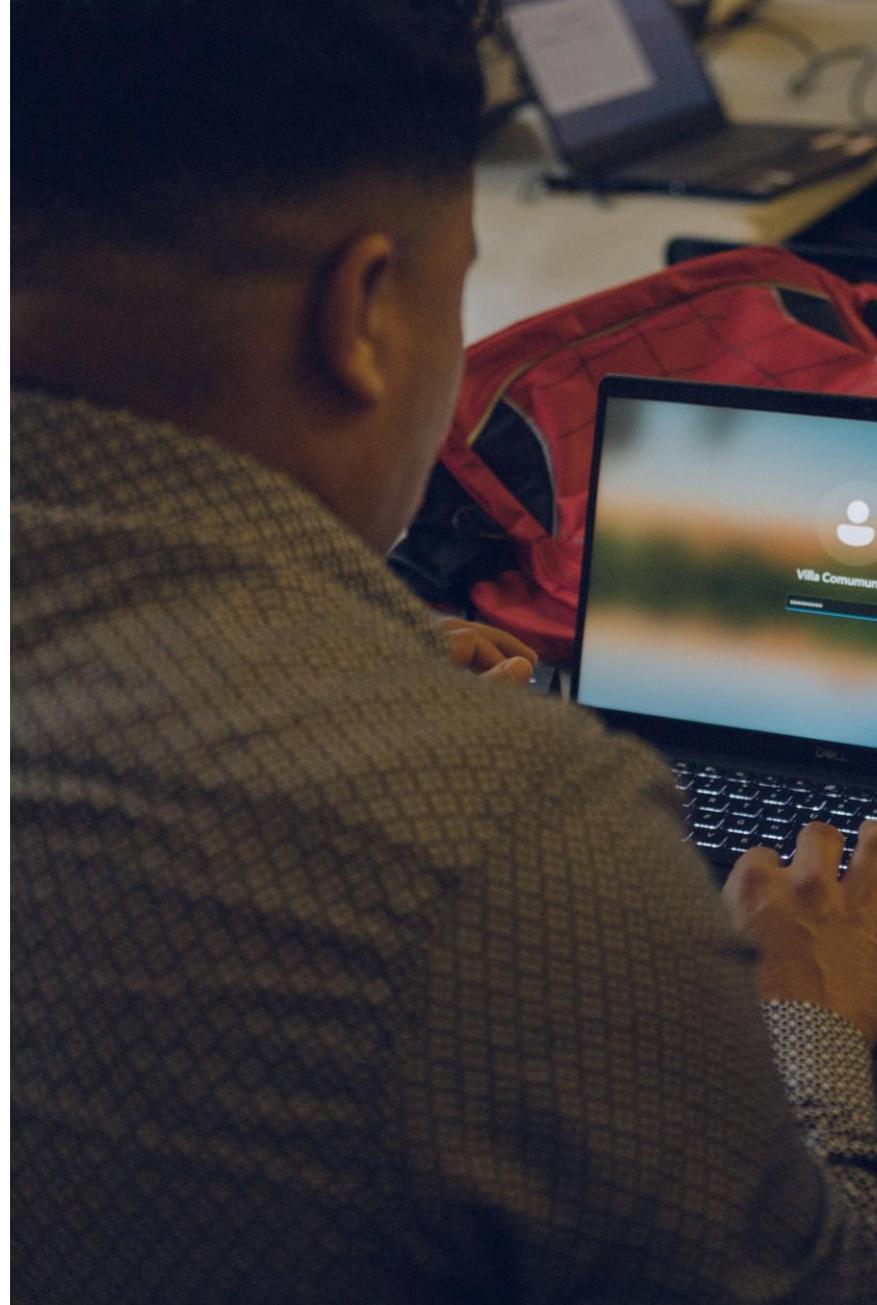
- SPL network (wired & wireless), Wi-Fi hotspots

Digital security

- Staffing, cyber threat monitoring tools

Capital IT

- Network infrastructure



Highlights

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Increased access to technology and digital tools

- Released new Library app in 2025
- Provided access to:
 - In-building Wi-Fi
 - Wi-Fi hotspots
 - Public computers
 - Print, copying, scanning

Improved systems, infrastructure, and security

- Accelerated cybersecurity program since 2024
- New Integrated Library System launches in 2026
- Network switches – systemwide replacement



Spending by Funding Source

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 budgeted
General Fund	\$4.52M	\$3.49M	\$4.33M	\$5.04M	\$5.30M	\$5.20M	\$4.97M
Library Levy	\$1.69M	\$2.01M	\$2.71M	\$3.03M	\$3.69M	\$3.17M	\$3.33M
Private Funds	\$0.27M	\$0.48M	\$0.54M	\$0.39M	\$0.52M	\$0.51M	\$0.23M

Accomplishments

Open Hours & Access

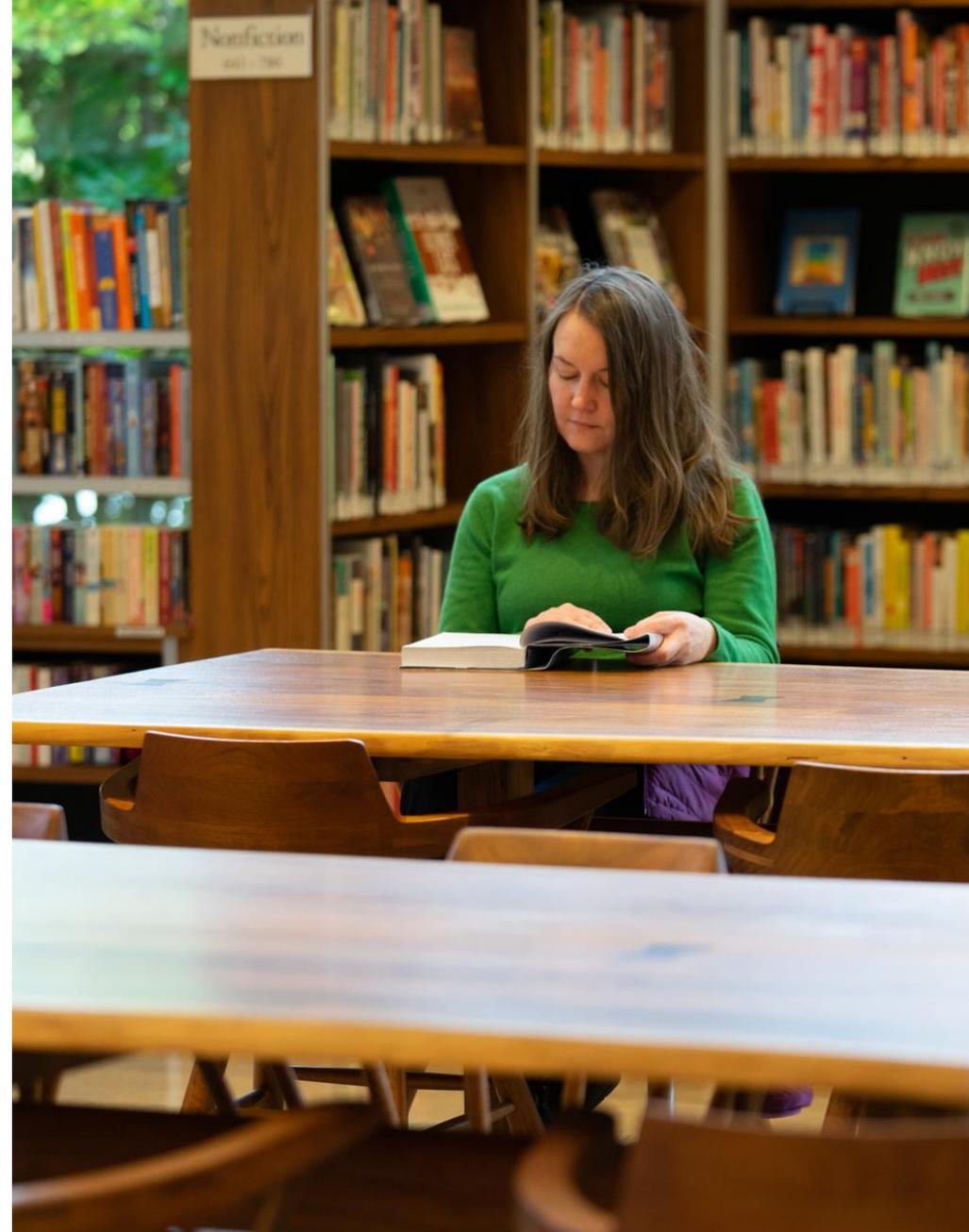


Overview

HOURS & ACCESS

Open Hours provides community access to:

- 27 safe and welcoming public spaces
 - Cooling, warming and clean air centers
- Over 1.8M physical books and other items
- Information services staff
 - Answered over 37,000 patron questions through our Ask Us service in 2025 such as open hours, special collections inquiries, program information
- Free public meeting rooms at 22 locations
- Free private study rooms at 17 locations
- Thousands of free programs each year
- Free Wi-Fi, computers, device charging, assistive technology and more



Highlights

HOURS & ACCESS

Stabilized Open Hours

- Significantly impacted by unanticipated factors
 - 2020 pandemic closures and post-COVID hiring challenges, citywide hiring freeze,
 - Built hours back = 1,398 systemwide hours per week
 - Slightly higher than 2019 levels (~20 more hours per week)
 - More consistent schedules & fewer unexpected closures
- 14 locations open 7 days a week
 - Central, Ballard, Beacon Hill, Capitol Hill, Columbia, Douglass-Truth, Greenwood, High Point, Lake City, Montlake, Northeast, Northgate, Rainier Beach, South Park
- 12 locations open 6 days a week
 - Broadview, Delridge, Fremont, Green Lake, International District/Chinatown, Madrona-Sally Goldmark, Magnolia, NewHolly, Queen Anne, Southwest, Wallingford, West Seattle
- University Branch closed for construction

Increased Library Access

- Fine-free borrowing since 2020
- 24/7 pick-up lockers at 7 locations
- Automatic renewal of materials if not on hold for other patrons



Increased Security

- Levy funds 9 security officers (24 staff total)
 - Essential personnel for public safety
 - Deployed from Central Library with special emphasis patrols at branches as needed
 - On duty early morning until late evening, seven days a week

Spending by Funding Source

HOURS & ACCESS

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 <i>budgeted</i>
General Fund	\$27.76M	\$24.23M	\$29.16M	\$29.97M	\$35.08M	\$33.65M	\$28.91M
Library Levy	\$9.18M	\$10.63M	\$11.21M	\$12.11M	\$13.95M	\$15.99M	\$22.48M
Private Funds	\$0.85M	\$1.03M	\$1.08M	\$1.05M	\$1.13M	\$1.51M	\$1.50M

Accomplishments

Helping Children



Overview

HELPING CHILDREN

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn

- The only program fully funded by the levy
- For children ages 0-5 and their parents and caregivers
 - In partnership with community-based organizations
 - Weekly, 90-minute guided play sessions
 - Held at 7 Library locations
 - Supports school readiness, language development, and social skills
 - Offered in English, Amharic, Chinese (Mandarin), Somali, and Spanish
 - Bilingual delivery at select locations



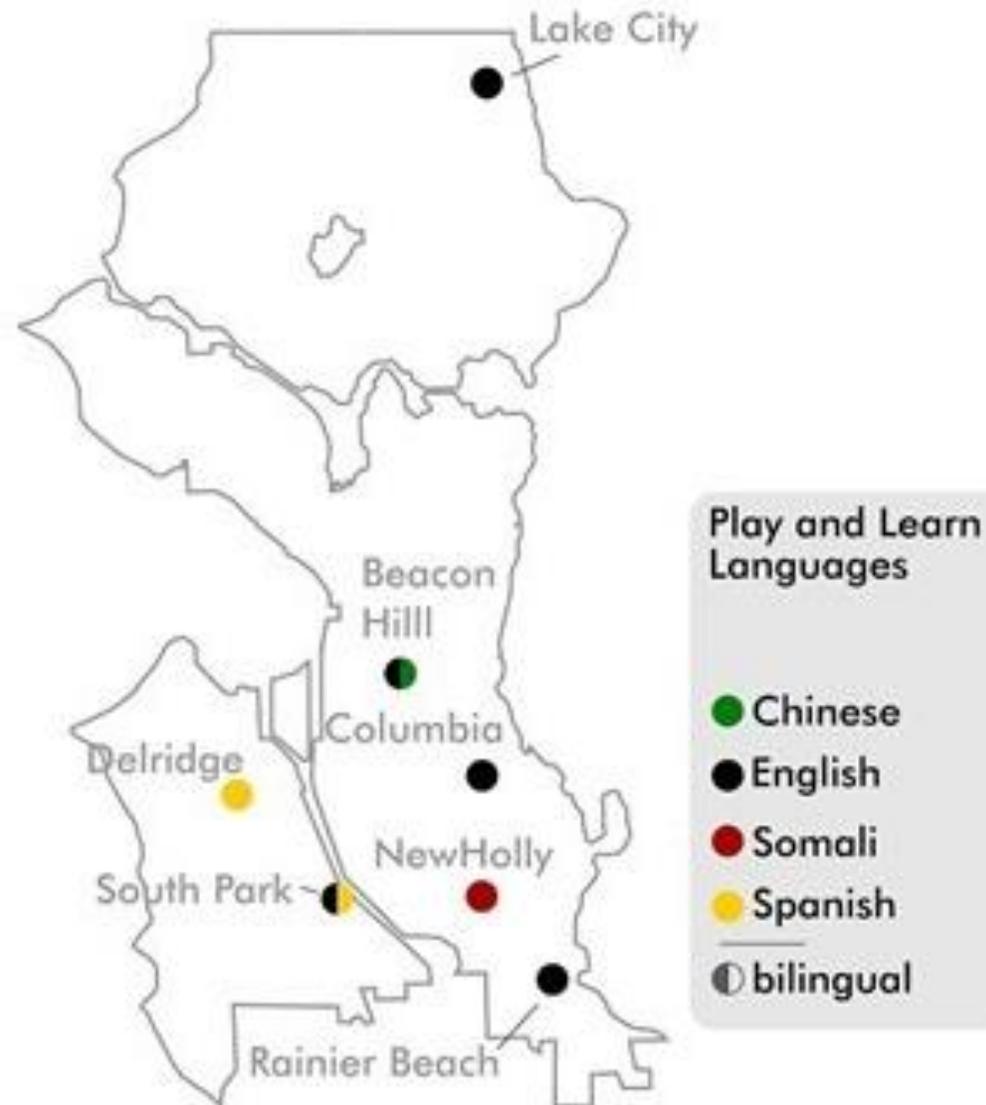
Highlights

HELPING CHILDREN

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn

- Nearly 300 sessions annually across seven branches
- Approximately 7,000 participants per year
- Post-participation surveys show participant satisfaction
 - 83% of parent and caregiver participants report increased understanding of activities that help children develop school-readiness skills

Program Locations and Languages



Spending by Funding Source

HELPING CHILDREN

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 <i>budgeted</i>
General Fund	\$450k	\$431k	\$447k	\$569k	\$616k	\$626k	\$679k
Library Levy	\$110k	\$153k	\$146k	\$338k	\$420k	\$406k	\$468k
Private Funds	\$680k	\$685k	\$448k	\$704k	\$526k	\$669k	\$836k

Administration & Central Costs



Overview

ADMINISTRATION & CENTRAL COSTS

Provides funding for levy administration

- One part-time levy analyst
- Two part-time financial analysts

Provides funding for City of Seattle Central Costs

- Rate-base allocations for general services provided by and for City of Seattle departments:
 - Includes HR, IT and FAS
 - The Library relies on the City for limited services but has its own HR, IT, and Admin Services divisions
- Transferred from General Fund to the levy during budget development in 2023
 - \$263k in 2023
 - \$386k in 2024
 - \$401k in 2025



Spending by Funding Source

ADMINISTRATION & CENTRAL COSTS

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 <i>budgeted</i>
General Fund	\$6.48M	\$7.34M	\$7.83M	\$7.72M	\$8.29M	\$8.50M	\$9.07M
Library Levy	\$0.30M	\$0.29M	\$0.29M	\$0.45M	\$0.47M	\$0.66M	\$0.74M
Private Funds	\$0.23M	\$0.22M	\$0.23M	\$0.23M	\$0.25M	\$0.41M	\$0.47M

Questions?

www.spl.org/Levy

Thank you!

www.spl.org/Levy