

# The Seattle Public Library

## 2026 Library Levy: Read. Grow. Belong.

March 25, 2026

**Brian Surratt, Deputy Mayor**

**Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian**

**Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services**

[www.spl.org/Levy](http://www.spl.org/Levy)

# Agenda

1. Mayor Wilson's Vision
2. Proposal Development Process
3. 2026 Library Levy Proposal



# Mayor Wilson's Vision: Read. Grow. Belong.

The proposed 2026 Library Levy seeks to invest in:

- **Books:** For a city of readers and a City of Literature
- **Public spaces:** Where everyone belongs
- **Early literacy:** For children and their caregivers
- **Enrichment:** Materials and programs for all ages
- **Empowerment:** Classes and resources to help achieve life goals



# Mayor Wilson's Vision: Return on Investment

**97% of Seattleites surveyed** say the Library is worth the money invested.

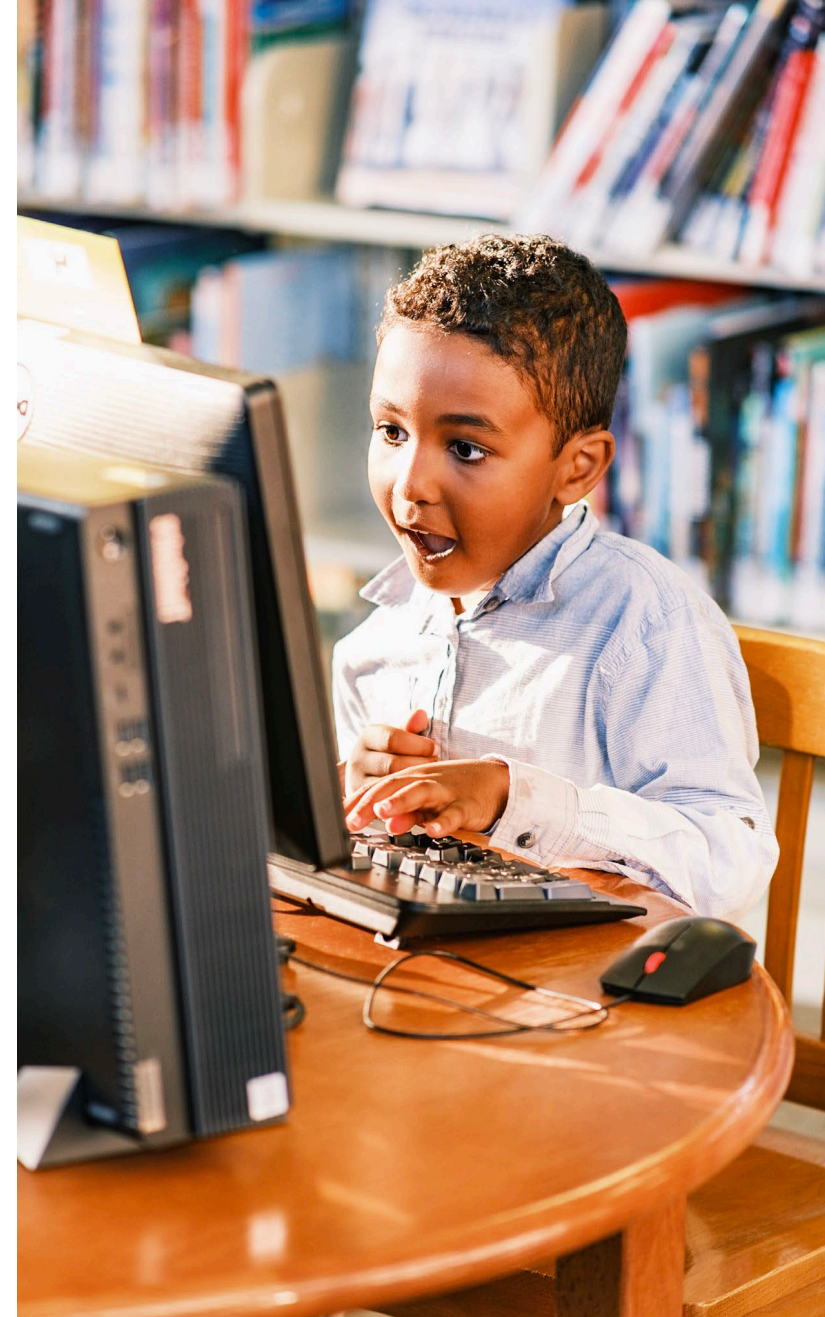
Olympic Research & Strategy survey

The Library's collection had a **\$16.48** return on value for every **\$1** spent in 2025.

American Library Association Value Calculator

The Library provided a value of nearly **\$8.4M** in 2025 to small business entrepreneurs.

Urban Libraries Council



# Development of Levy Proposal

- **2022 Community Conversations**
  - Held at High Point, Rainier Beach, Greenwood and Lake City
- **Published 2024-2033 Strategic Plan**
  - Informed development of levy
  - Significant community and staff engagement starting in 2023
- **2025 Community Engagement**
  - Statistically significant survey (Olympic Research & Strategy)
  - Workshops with partners and meeting room users
  - Facilitated discussions with leaders from across Seattle
    - Seattle Public Schools, CARE Team, DON, OED, Parks, Seattle Center, Chamber of Commerce
  - Passive patron engagement activities at 14 locations
    - Open-ended prompts for patrons to answer





# 2026 Library Levy Proposal

## Investment Areas

### Hours & Access

- Open hours at 27 libraries
- Early learning support
- All-ages programs

### Collections

- Books and materials
- E-books and e-audiobooks

### Building Maintenance

- Capital Improvements
- Routine and responsive maintenance

### Technology & Online Services

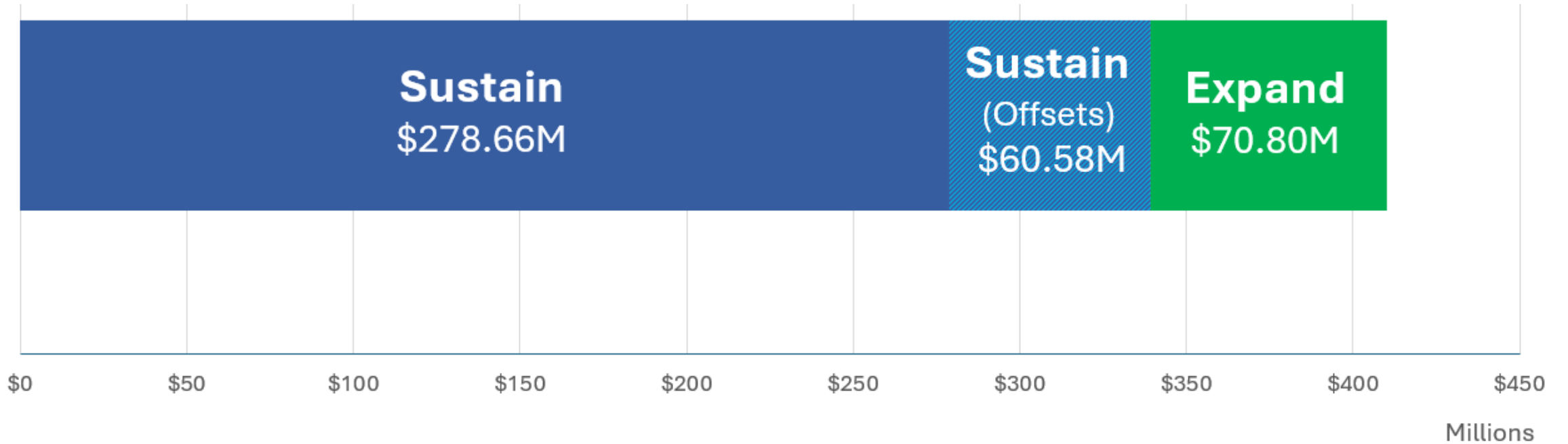
- Public and staff computers
- Access to the high-speed internet
- Digital equity initiatives

### Administration



# 2026 Library Levy Proposal

## Sustain and Expand





# 2026 Library Levy Proposal

## Cost to Taxpayers

	2019 Levy 2020-2026 funding	2026 Levy 2027-2033 funding
7-year property tax levy	\$219.1M	\$410M
Assessed value	\$0.12 per \$1,000	\$0.19 per \$1,000
Cost for residential property owners	<b>\$85</b> on average per levy year (based on median assessed residential value)	<b>\$163</b> on average per levy year (based on median assessed residential value)

# Hours & Access: \$218.4M



## Hours & Access: \$218.4M

### Continues funding for:

- **Open hours**  
Maintain service at 27 Library locations
- **Early literacy**  
Multilingual Play & Learns for children ages 0-5 at 7 locations
- **Social service referrals**  
Provides one community resource specialist
- **Security**  
Funds nine of the Library's 24 security personnel



## Hours & Access: \$218.4M

### Adds funding for:

- **More all-ages programs: \$12.6M**
  - Story times and other literacy programs at more locations
  - Classes and workshops to help people achieve life goals
  - Events that help bring joy and connection to people's lives
- **Increased security and emergency preparedness: \$7.7M**
  - Six security officers; upgrades security systems
- **Establishing an Office of Inclusion and Belonging: \$2.4M**
  - Focused on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility





# Hours & Access: \$218.4M

Hours & Access	Baseline = 2019 Levy + Offsets + Inflation	2026 Levy 7 Year Total
Baseline Levy Hours Support	\$176.14M	\$176.14M
Program Support	\$7.48M	\$22.43M
Security & Emergency Preparedness	\$11.01M	\$18.66M
Community Resource Specialist	\$1.18M	\$1.18M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$195.8M</b>	<b>\$218.41M</b>

## 2019 Levy: Hours & Access

**Total: \$98.1M** out of \$219.1M

\*Includes Helping Children category

# Collections: Books & Materials: \$58.5M



# Collections: \$58.5M

## Continues funding for:

- **Books and materials**
  - Currently provides about 55% of the Library's funding for books and other materials
- **Fine-free borrowing**
  - Restored access for 18,000 patrons with suspended accounts
  - Did not impact return rates
  - Patrons return items, on average, 5 days before they are due
- **Collections and shelving staff**
  - Currently provides funding for 10.8 FTE shelving, acquisitions, processing, and Special Collections staff



# Collections: \$58.5M

## Adds funding for:

- **More physical books: \$2.2M**
  - To continue building a broad and deep collection
- **More e-books and e-audiobooks: \$2.4**
  - To keep up with increasing demand and rising costs





# Collections: \$58.5M

Collections	Baseline = 2019 Levy + Offsets + Inflation	2026 Levy 7 Year Total
<b>Collections</b> (Physical, Electronic)	\$30.83M	\$35.43M
<b>Collections Staffing</b>	\$11.43M	\$11.43M
<b>Fine Free Program</b>	\$8.97M	\$8.97M
<b>Collections Non-Labor Support</b> (RFID tags, plastic covers, etc.)	\$2.67M	\$2.67M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$53.91M</b>	<b>\$58.51M</b>

## 2019 Levy: Collections

**Total: \$43.4M** out of \$219.1M

# Building Maintenance: \$85.9M



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## Continues funding for:

- **Routine and major maintenance**
  - HVAC replacements, reroofing, etc.
  - Landscaping, janitorial/custodial, building system and controls, etc.
- **Facility support**
  - Deep cleanings, power washing, window washing, etc.
- **Library furniture**
- **Capital improvement staffing and administration**
- **Custodial and building maintenance staffing**



# Building Maintenance: \$85.9M

## Adds funding for:

- **Priority and deferred maintenance: \$10M**
  - Address potential life/safety concerns
  - Replace end-of-life systems and infrastructure
  - Improve ADA accessibility across the system
- **Seismic retrofit of historic Columbia Branch: \$13M**
  - Improve seismic safety and sustainability
  - Improve public space
- **Increasing facility and custodial support: \$5.9M**
  - Address window, plumbing, and HVAC repairs
  - Maintain elevators and escalators at 10 locations



# Building Maintenance: \$85.9M

Building Maintenance	Baseline = 2019 Levy + Offsets + Inflation	2026 Levy 7 Year Total
Facilities & Custodial Support	\$17.09M	\$22.98M
Major Maintenance & CIP Staffing	\$39.93M	\$39.93M
Seismic Retrofit	\$0	\$13M
Bldg. Life/Safety, Deferred & Scheduled Maintenance	\$0	\$10M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$57.01M</b>	<b>\$85.91M</b>

**2019 Levy: Building Maintenance**

**Total: \$50.6M** out of \$219.1M

# Technology & Online Services: \$38.2M



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## Continues funding for:

- Public and staff computers
- Printing and copying services
- Wi-Fi HotSpots
- IT and Online Services staffing



# Technology & Online Services: \$38.2M

## Adds funding for:

- **Upgrading IT infrastructure: \$5M**
  - Improve infrastructure for a continued fast, stable, secure Library network
- **Strengthening IT systems and cybersecurity: \$7.4M**
  - Increase oversight and management of critical data and systems
  - Improve management of mobile devices
  - Modernize end-of-life legacy systems





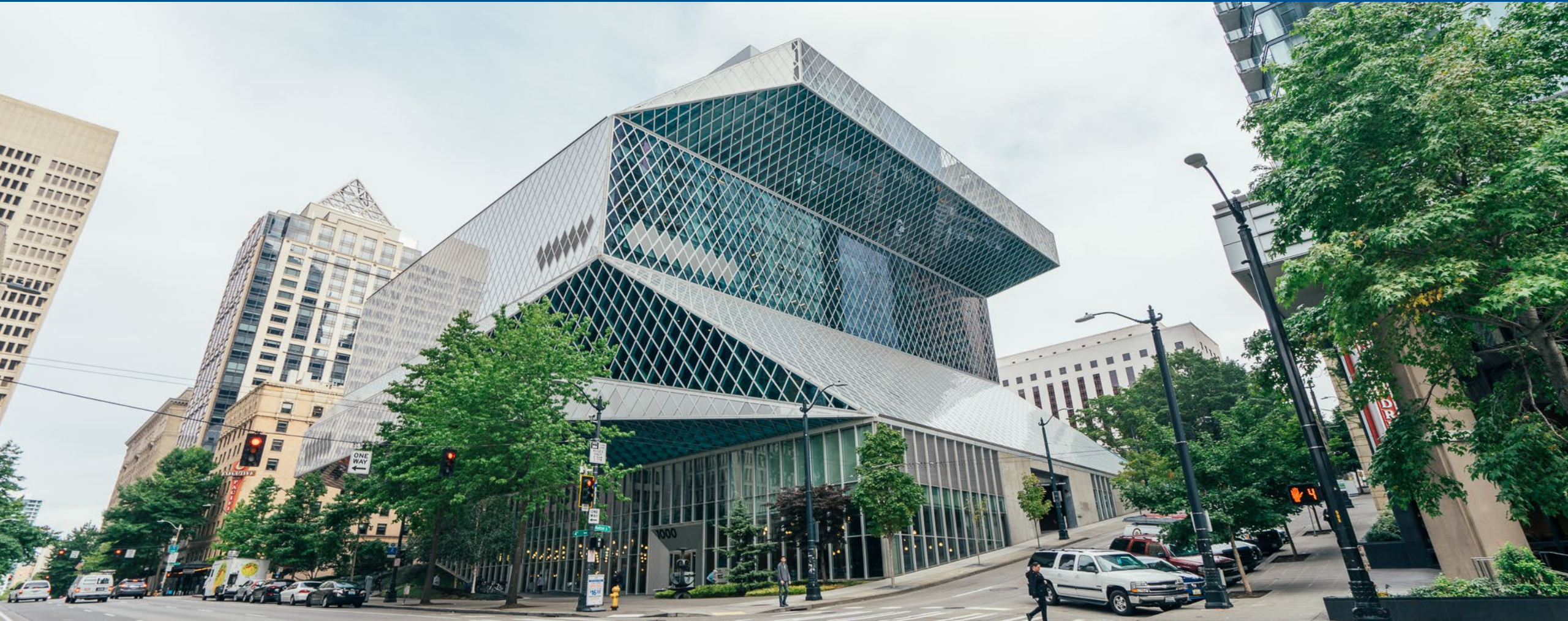
# Technology & Online Services: \$38.2M

Tech & Online Services	Baseline = 2019 Levy + Offsets + Inflation	2026 Levy 7 Year Total
Computing Services	\$16.3M	\$16.3M
Communications, Marketing & Online Services	\$6.2M	\$6.2M
IT Staffing	\$3.31M	\$3.31M
Cybersecurity Enhancements	\$0	\$3.05M
Mobile Device Management	\$0	\$1.23M
Enterprise Applications & Support	\$0	\$3.12M
Upgrade Capital IT	\$0	\$5M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25.82M</b>	<b>\$38.21M</b>

**2019 Levy: Tech & Online Services**

**Total: \$23.7M** out of \$219.1M

# Administration: \$9M



## Administration: \$9M

### Continues funding for:

- Levy administration staffing (2 FTE)
- Rate-based allocation of costs for centralized services provided by the City of Seattle

### Adds funding for:

- **Human Resources: \$2.3 million**
  - Two FTE staff



# Administration: \$9M

Administration	Baseline = 2019 Levy + Offsets + Inflation	2026 Levy 7 Year Total
Levy Administration Support	\$6.66M	\$6.66M
Human Resources Support	\$0	\$2.31M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6.66M</b>	<b>\$8.97M</b>

**2019 Levy: Administration**

**Total: \$3.3M** out of \$219.1M

\*Does not include HR support

# Questions

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# Thank you!

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