



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Select Committee on the Library Levy

Agenda

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

9:30 AM

Council Chamber, City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Maritza Rivera, Chair
Joy Hollingsworth, Vice-Chair
Dionne Foster, Member
Debora Juarez, Member
Robert Kettle, Member
Eddie Lin, Member
Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Member
Rob Saka, Member
Dan Strauss, Member

Chair Info: 206-684-8804; Maritza.Rivera@seattle.gov

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Meeting Location:

Council Chamber, City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

Committee Website:

<https://www.seattle.gov/council/select-committee-on-the-library-levy>

This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business.

Members of the public may register for remote or in-person Public Comment to address the Council. Please register in advance in order to be recognized by the Chair. Details on how to register for Public Comment are listed below:

Remote Public Comment - Register online to speak during the Public Comment period at the meeting at <https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>. Online registration to speak will begin one hour before the meeting start time, and registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting.

In-Person Public Comment - Register to speak on the public comment sign-up sheet located inside Council Chambers at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting start time. Registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting.

Please submit written comments no later than four business hours prior to the start of the meeting to ensure that they are distributed to Councilmembers prior to the meeting. Comments may be submitted at Council@seattle.gov or at Seattle City Hall, Attn: Council Public Comment, 600 4th Ave., Floor 2, Seattle, WA 98104. Business hours are considered 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Comments received after that time will be distributed after the meeting to Councilmembers and included as part of the public record.

Please Note: Times listed are estimated

A. Call To Order

B. Approval of the Agenda

C. Public Comment

Members of the public may address items on the agenda and matters within the purview of the committee. Please register in advance to be recognized by the Chair.

D. Items of Business

1. Overview of the 2019 Library Levy

Supporting Documents: [Presentation](#)

Briefing and Discussion

Presenters: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian, Rick Sheridan, and Rob Gannon, Seattle Public Library

E. Adjournment



Legislation Text

File #: Inf 2856, **Version:** 1

Overview of the 2019 Library Levy

The Seattle Public Library

Library Levy Background

March 11, 2026

www.spl.org/Levy

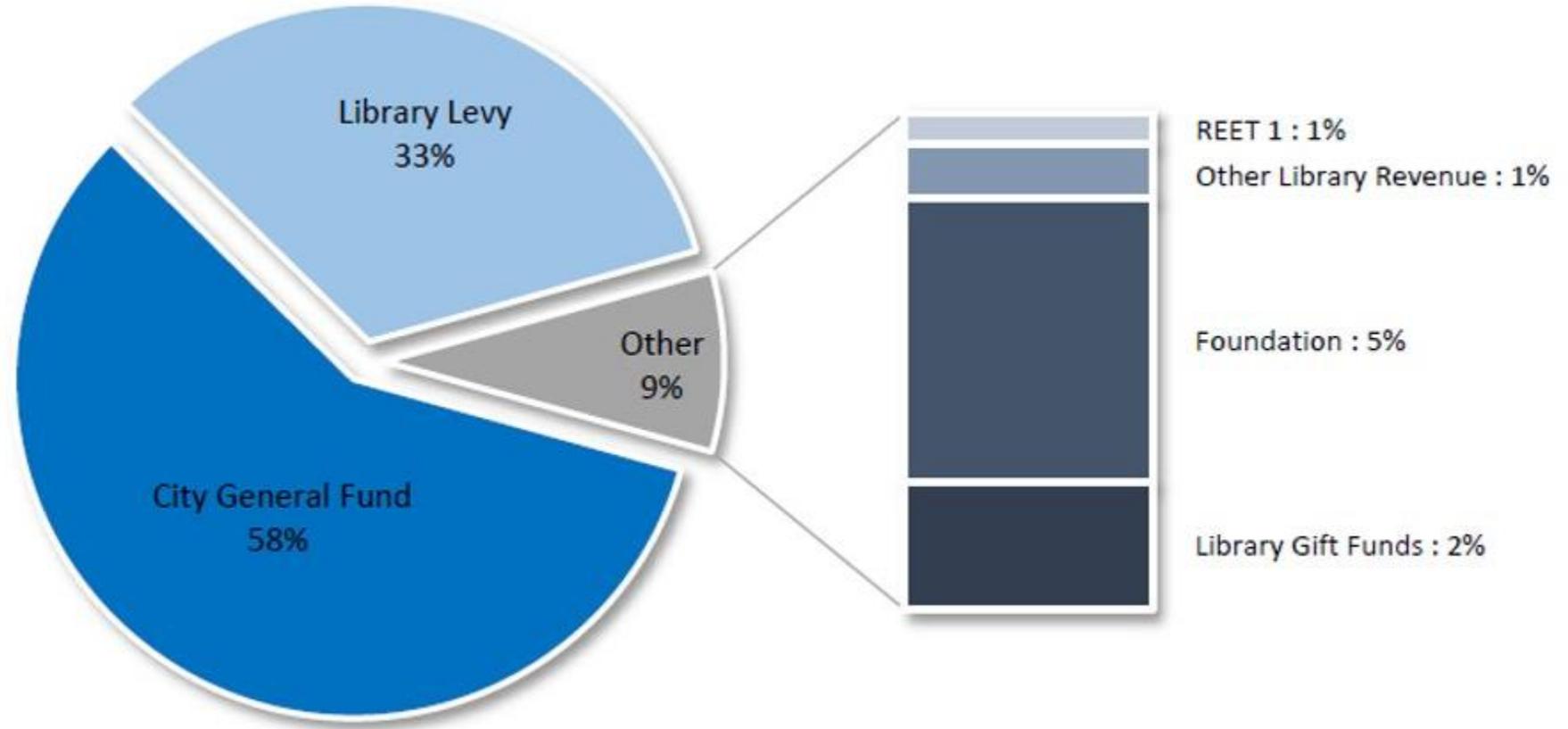
2026 Library Budget

Operating budget \$102.5M

- \$35.7M from levy

Capital budget \$2.6M

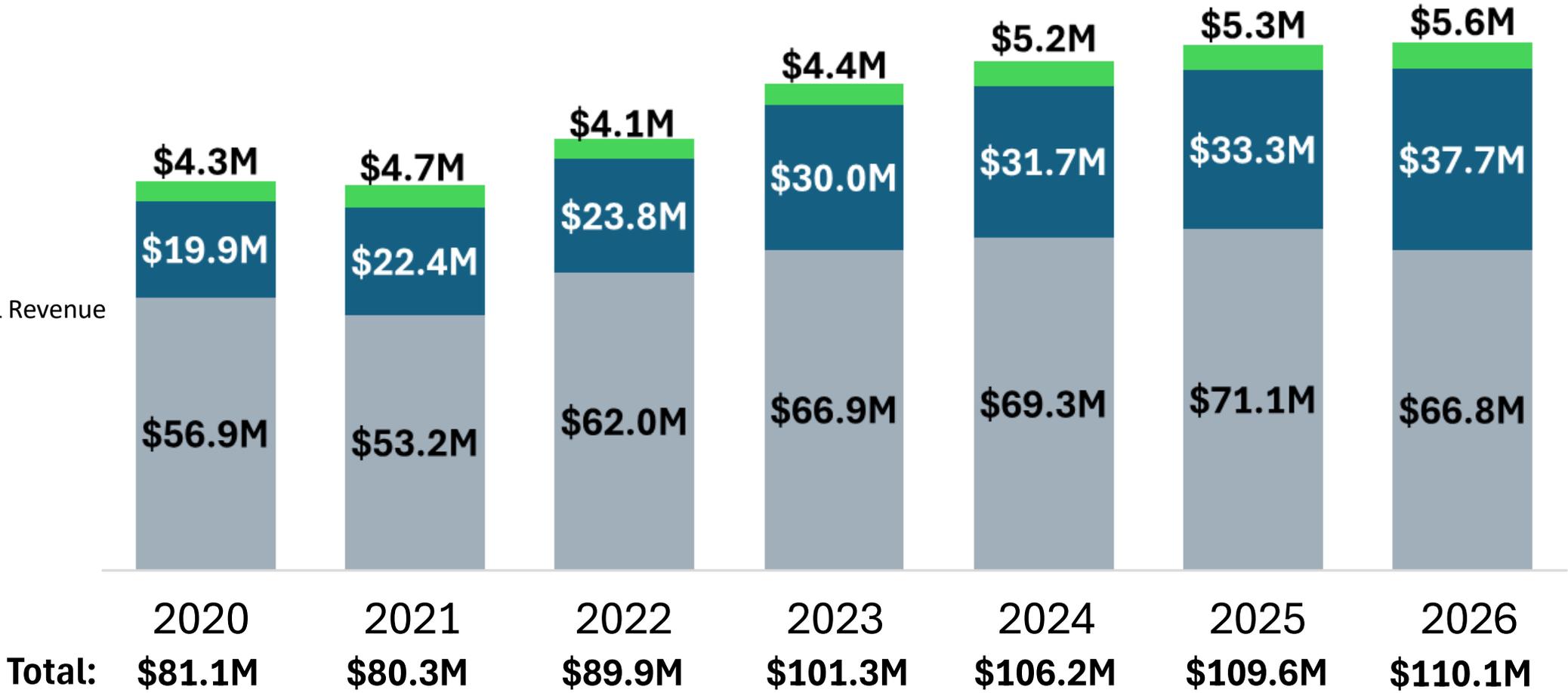
- \$2.0M from levy
- \$605k from REET





Library Budget: **By Funding Source**

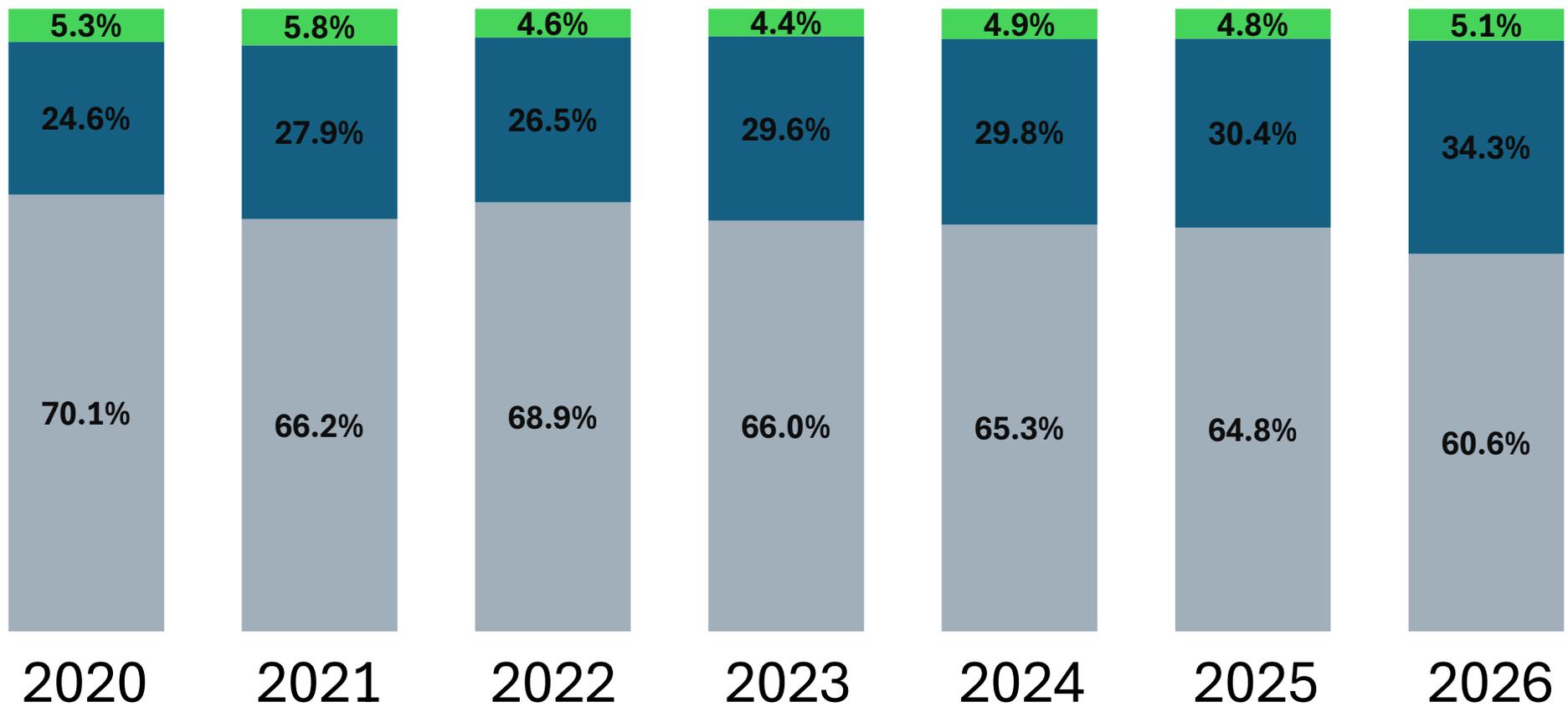
- SPLF/Private
- 2019 Library Levy
- General Fund + SPL Revenue





Annual Levy Funding: Funding Source by Percentage

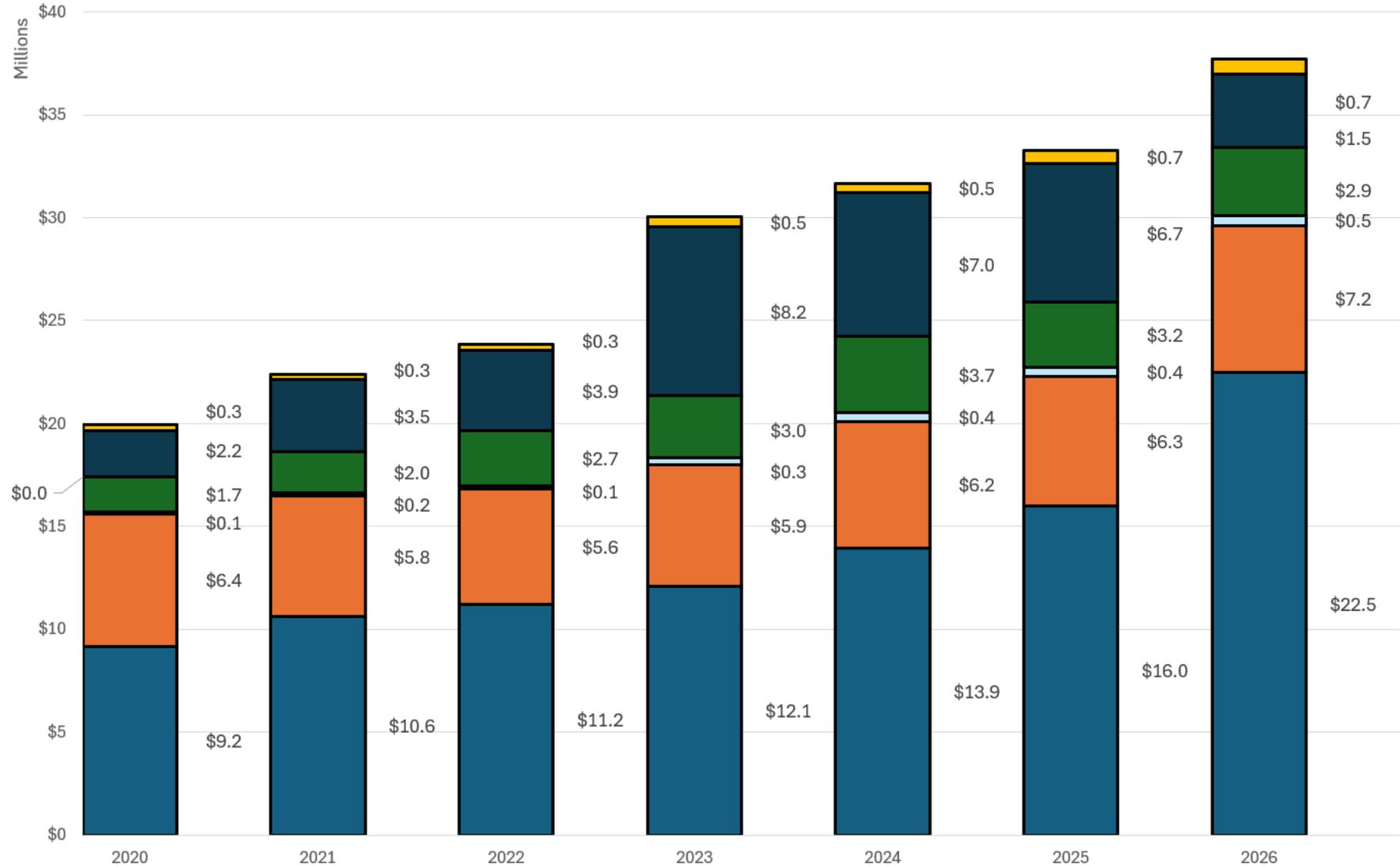
- SPLF/Private
- 2019 Library Levy
- General Fund + SPL Revenue





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	\$14.56M
Library Levy	\$6.42M	\$5.83M	\$5.56M	\$5.87M	\$6.16M	\$6.32M	\$7.15M
Private Funds	\$2.21M	\$1.75M	\$1.58M	\$1.98M	\$1.95M	\$2.13M	\$2.34M

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

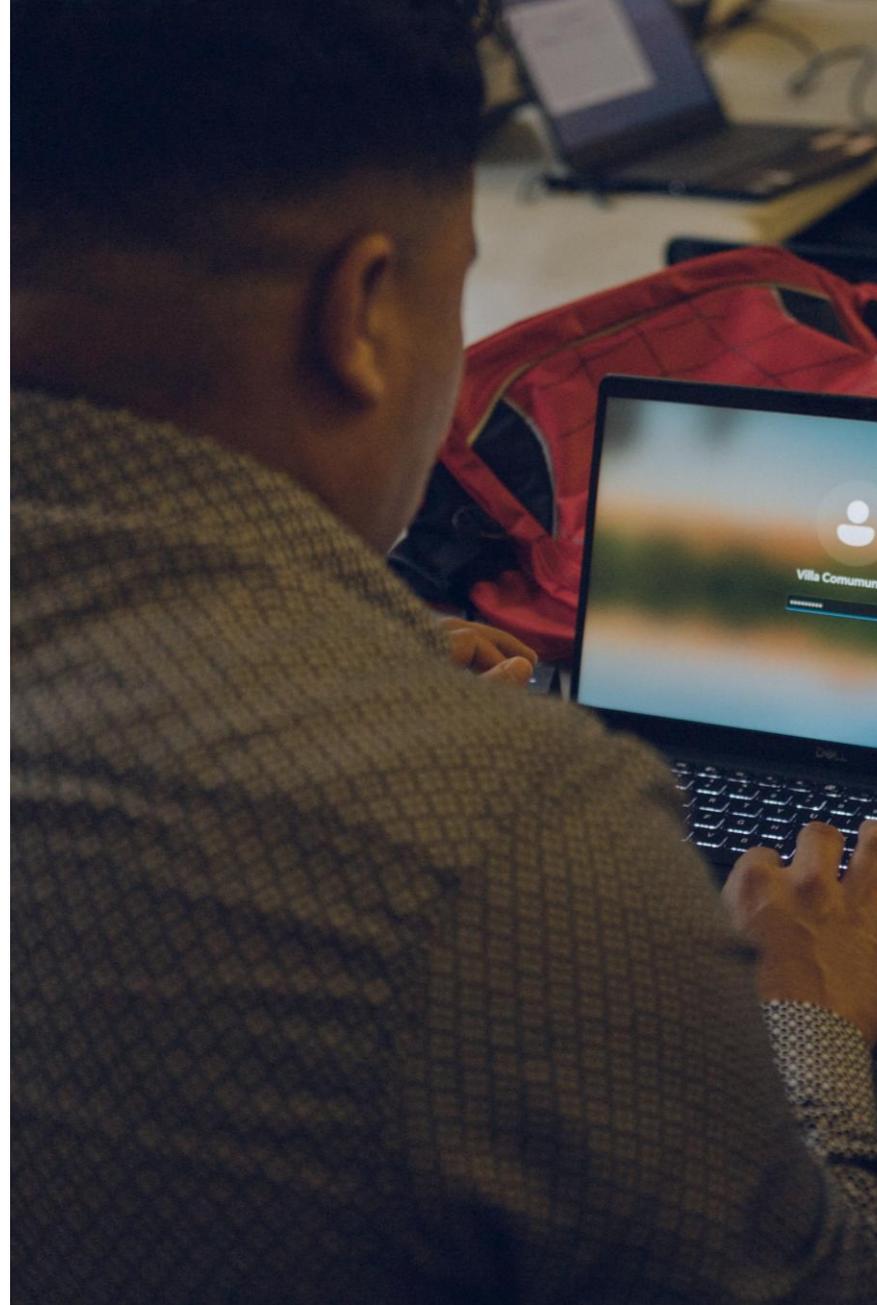
- SPL network (wired & wireless), Wi-Fi hotspots

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

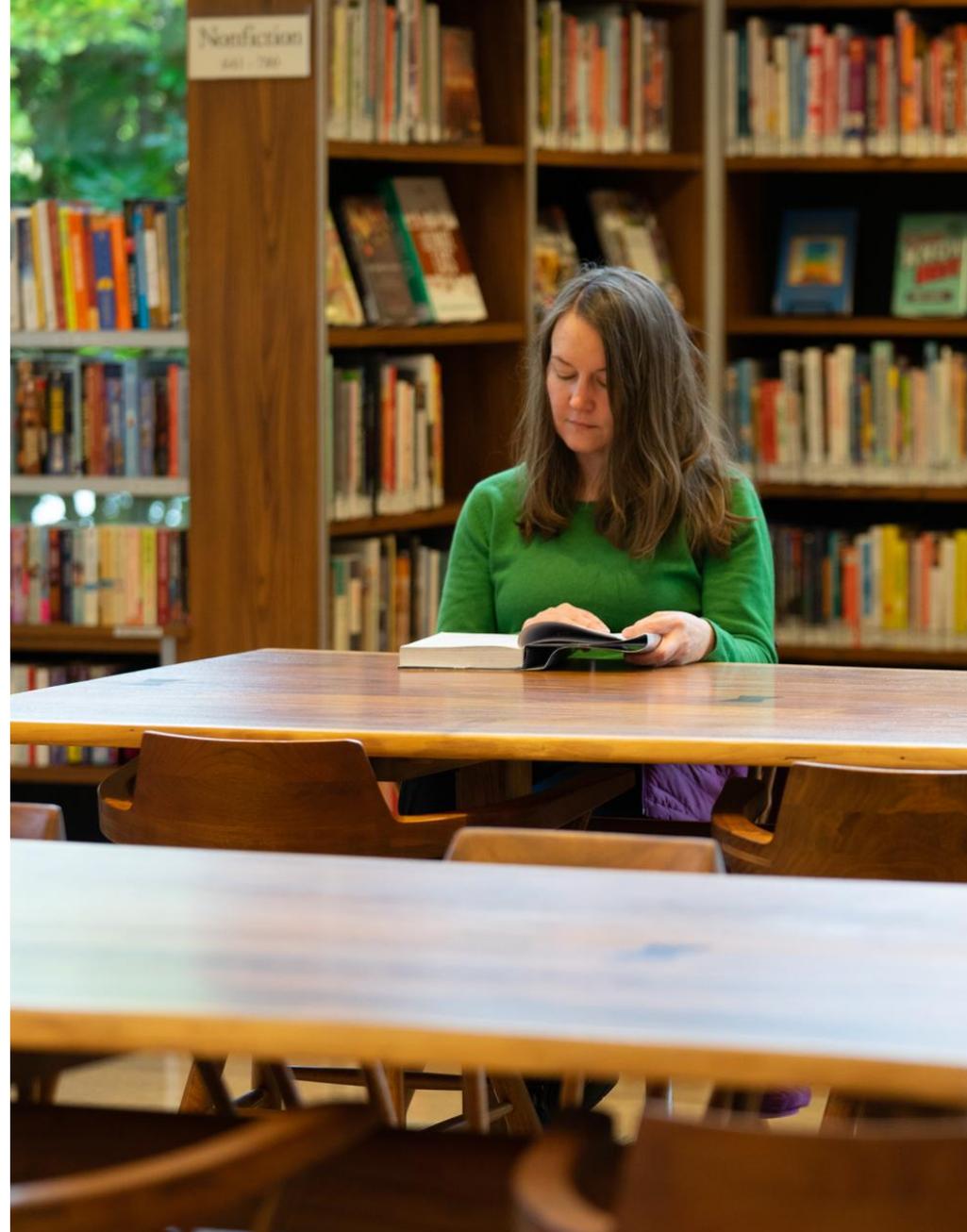


Overview

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



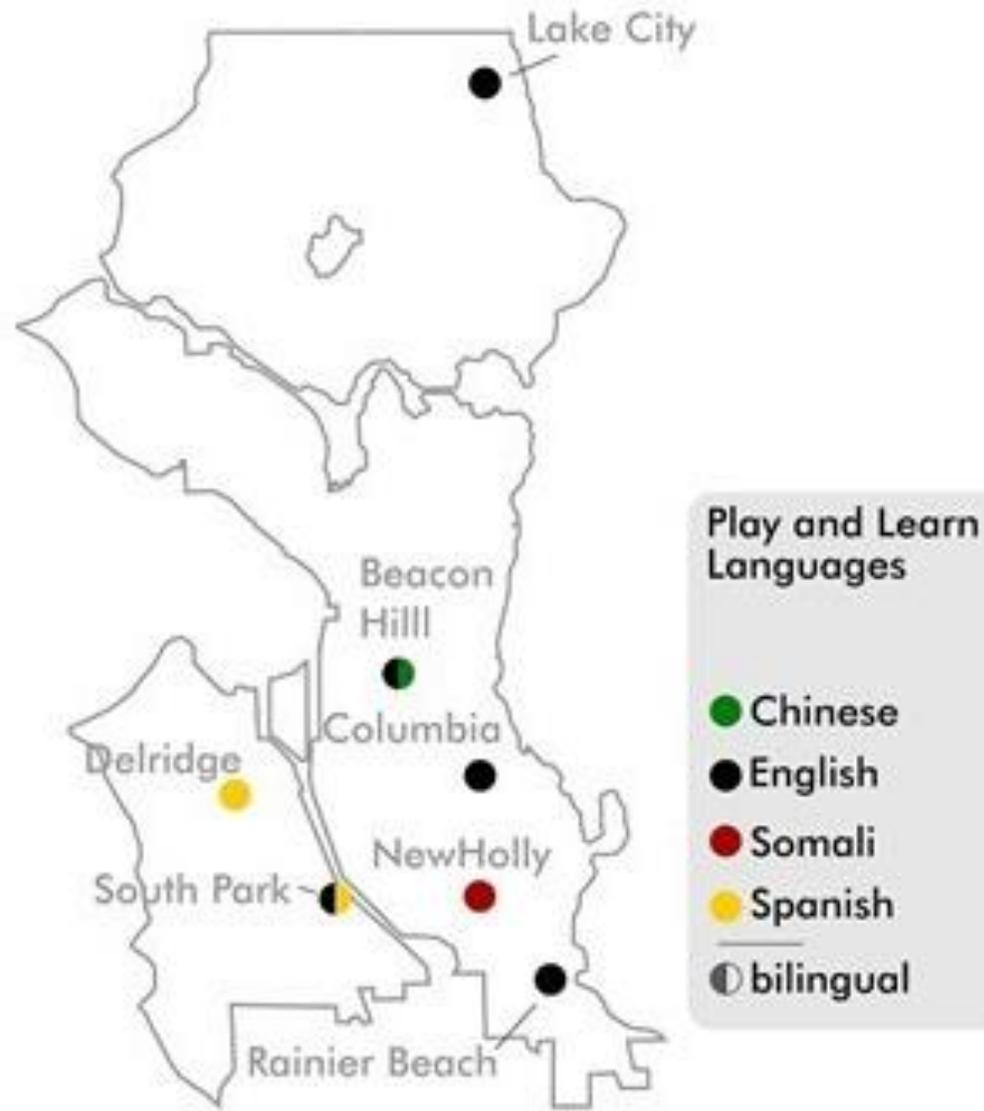
Highlights

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