

LAKE FOREST LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Lake Forest Library, 360 East Deerpath Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045
Kasian Room, Lower Level
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 6:30 pm

The Lake Forest Library provides members of the public present at the meetings with an opportunity to participate in the meeting. No prior registration is necessary. The meeting agenda and materials are available on the Library website. The meeting's minutes are available on the Library website after they are approved by the Library Board of Trustees. Current and past meeting information, including recordings, is available at: [Board Meetings & Minutes | Lake Forest Library](#)

Agenda

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. President's Remarks
4. Trustee Comments
5. Call for Additions to the Agenda
6. Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board
7. Staff Presentations:
 - a. Read Between the Ravines
 - b. Proposed Ebook Legislation - Digital Library Protection Act, House Bill 5236
8. Correspondence Report and Patron Comments
9. Consent Agenda (omnibus vote on matters 9(a) - 9(d):
 - a. Approve March 17, 2026 Agenda
 - b. Approve February 17, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - c. Approve February 2026 Financial Report
 - d. Approve March 10, 2026 Finance Committee Minutes
10. Building Committee:
 - a. Exterior Courtyards Restoration - Update
 - b. 1931 Historic Rooms Revitalization - Update
 - c. Other Projects
11. Finance Committee: FY2027 Budget Version 2
12. Fundraising for Capital Projects
13. Library Operations Report – February 2026
14. Executive Director Performance Appraisal Timeline
15. Statement of Economic Interest
16. Unfinished Business
17. New Business
18. Adjournment.

Next Meeting: Regular Board Meeting – Tuesday, April 21, 2026, 6:30 pm.

Special meetings may be called at any time with proper notice pursuant to the Library's bylaws. Individuals with disabilities who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meetings or the facilities are requested to contact the Library Director at 847.810.4602 promptly to allow the Library to make reasonable accommodations.

PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS POLICY

The Illinois Open Meetings Act provides in Section 2.06 that at meetings of public bodies, "any person shall be permitted an opportunity to address public officials under the rules established and recorded by the public body." 5 ILCS 120/2.06(g).

The Board of Trustees welcomes public participation. This policy provides the following rules and guidelines for public participation at its meetings.

Individuals attending board meetings must conduct themselves with respect and civility toward others. Abusive, profane, threatening, or harassing language and/or personal attacks will not be permitted. The Board President or presiding officer may prohibit further comment at the meeting by a speaker whose remarks violate this rule.

Public comments are permitted during the time designated on the Board of Trustees meeting agenda, unless otherwise directed by the Board President.

The Board President determines the order in which speakers will be recognized.

When recognized by the Board President, the speaker should begin by stating his or her name and address.

Public comments will ordinarily be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. The Board President shall have discretion to modify this time limit, as well as to limit repetitive comments.

Members of the public will not be allowed to speak a second time until all members of the public who wish to speak have been allowed to do so. The Board President will determine whether second public comments will be permitted, and if so, the appropriate amount of time for public discussion, and will end public comment at his/her discretion.

Board members are not obligated to respond to comments from the public. Issues requiring possible action by the board may be added to a future meeting agenda, and issues that can be addressed by library administration will be noted.

A copy of these guidelines will be placed next to the sign-in sheet made available to members of the public at the entrance to board meetings.

Petitions or written correspondence directed to the board shall be presented to the board by the Board President or Secretary at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Minutes are a summary of the board's discussion and actions. Speaker requests to append written statements or correspondence to the minutes are not favored. Generally, written materials presented to the board will be included in the library's files rather than in the minutes. The Board President shall have the authority to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise defined in these guidelines. *(Approved by the Library Board of Trustees January 9, 2018.)*

**SELECTED PATRON COMMENTS
FEBRUARY 2026**

- Patron commented on how cute the displayed birdhouse entries were for the Mini Art Masterpiece program in February.
- Thanks for all the programs! It makes my life so exciting!
- Always very helpful. Accommodating. You are running the library very well.
- A patron was able to get a rare book via interlibrary loan and sends his thanks to Jeanie for being so helpful throughout the process.
- [Decluttering Zoom program] Great presentation and so much to learn and employ this spring!!!
- After answering a patron question on the phone, "Thank you--you are so efficient and so dependable! I love Lake Forest Library."
- These twins are often H-E-L-L, and they usually do not love anything. But, they LOVE you! (Talking about Lorie's Book Babies Storytime).
- A patron came in to get a library card and brought pages from the current newsletter where he had circled the 4 programs he wanted to sign up for. After registering for them at the Adult desk, he proudly held up his card and said "this will be the first use of my card!" (Note: we don't require a library card to sign up for programs but the patron was excited to now be considered a library patron.)
- You guys are great. I feel very blessed to have a library like ours! From a patron requesting curbside delivery.
- Patrons asked if there was a way to keep heat going in the Kasian room during a program (they said it started out at a good temperature but got too cold by the end)
- Patron wondered how long it would be until the courtyards would be finished? I explained what we were doing and said they would be finished at the end of April.
- I had numerous patrons tells me how much they enjoyed the program on the Chicago World's Fair and that they learned so much!
- It's great that we can come to the library for something nice to do on an unexpected day off!
- I like the new pencils! (Green LF Library logo pencils in Reference).
- About the Money Scavenger Hunt: I wanna do it again!

- About the Money Scavenger Hunt: That was a GREAT scavenger hunt!
- I'm trying to support the library more instead of buying books patron has the Libby and Hoopla app and has been reading ebooks and checking out physical books.
- A child very excitedly said that she plans to bring her new library card to school for show and tell next Friday.
- This is a good scavenger hunt (money)! My kids are having fun learning!
- A preschool girl came to the youth reference desk to deliver a hand-cut and decorated paper heart for the librarian who visits her school for storytime. Her mother said her daughter loves and looks forward to the librarian's visits, and they were halfway to the library when they realized they left the heart at home. The little girl insisted on going all the way home to bring the heart to the librarian.
- Love the special challenges the Library provides for her family throughout the year! Told me over the phone after I informed her that her four year old son had won a \$20 gift card to Sweets!
- Patron frustrated with coinbox while printing asked, "When you are going to automate this thing?" Let her know we know the system is old and are looking into options.
- The Build Your Own Mario Kart Track event sounds super fun!
- Patron making copies of taxes surprised we didn't have an option to pay with credit card or digitally.
- Super helpful upstairs (Circulation Department). All you guys are great!
- A family new to the area stopped into the children's library today with their nanny, who has been bringing their toddler to the library weekly. They were delighted to see the play area and Playtime program that they have heard so many nice things about. They had a wonderful visit today.
- My husband was so excited about the app! I can't wait to get my card set up on the app.
- The Build a Bot program with Woodlands Academy looks really interesting! All the programs the library does are super wonderful.
- Do you have a drinks/snacks vending machine? I forgot my water bottle. Advised we have a water fountain. Patron was aware.
- Beyond Words is excellent and very well done and we always have so many good programs.

- The Be My Valentine books are a really great way to discover something that you wouldn't usually read! My husband was thrilled about some of the books we brought home.
- "It's so great down here! Except for the heating, you guys really need to fix that."
- You guys give great recommendations! My son is way more likely to read a book I checked out for him if he knows it's recommended by you.
- At Lego Club today, a grandmother expressed how much they like this program. She gave her granddaughter the choice of going to get smoothies or Lego Club, and she chose the library.
- I just noticed that the book checkout slips have how much you have saved using the library - this is great! I saved over \$3,000 last year!
- Dear Kate and Lydia, Tonight's cooking demo lead by Chef Susan Maddox was fun and deliciously chocolate! Chef Susan from a favorite local French restaurant [Le Titi de Paris] entertained the audience with her delightful humor and baking techniques. Thank you, library staff, for doing a great job connecting with our community. It was an enriching event. Lake Forest Library is a treasure to every card holder! Warmly.
- About 12 people shouted out: THANK YOU! when leaving Valentine's Day Desserts Demo.
- About Lorie: Thanks for all your years of service! I remember coming here when you had your hair all the way down your back.
- About the Valentine's Day Desserts Demo & Tasting: I'm not a chef, but I enjoyed the program!
- Patron was having trouble with her App. As I was helping her she thanked me and commented she was still getting used to how nice and helpful we are at the library.
- A child said to his Grandma: "We can't make plans on Sunday, that's when I go to the Library."
- I just LOVE this Library! This is my first time visiting. I have been to Libraries up and down the North Shore, and the Lake Forest Library is by far the most charming!
- Patron thanked us for allowing past issues of magazines to check out.
- After helping someone fax a document: "Thank you so much! That was so easy!" The patron was also pleased to learn there was no charge for faxing.
- I hope you know this is an amazing place. It's so nice to have somewhere outside the house I can take her [5yo] where she can read and play.

- Note on my desk: Dear Miss Lorie, I came to the Library to see you. Please come here again, and we love you. Love, Olivia and Jamie.
- About the wrapped Valentine's books: My son loves these! He discovered Super Rabbit Boy [chapter book series] from one of them and he's been obsessed with it ever since.
- You have been so helpful! (Patron comment on the Sacagawea biographies that Kari had pulled for her 4th grade daughter)
- Parent of Winter Reading youth raffle winner, calling back after I left a voicemail: My son is so happy! We played him the recording [of the voicemail] and he got SO excited!
- Julie's story times are so much fun!
- Referring to groundhog puppet at the design center: This is one of my favorite crafts so far! (He then proceeded to demonstrate his daughter's puppet coming out of its den)
- You guys are the best here!
- I took a few patrons upstairs to look for a copy of Romeo and Juliet. I gave them a choice of three editions that were on the shelf, and they chose the NO FEAR edition. As we went back downstairs, one patron said to the other, "I love this place--they have everything you need!"





The latest rendering of the Glencoe library renovation as seen from Wyman Green. | Image by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill

[Glencoe, News](#)

With referendum looming, Glencoe library project gets necessary zoning relief

By [Martin Carlino](#) | 9:26 a.m. February 24, 2026

Glencoe trustees authored another decision last week that will keep the pages turning on the library's next chapter.

Glencoe's Village Board during its Thursday, Feb. 19 meeting unanimously approved a pair of special-use permits tied to the library's plans for a multi-million-dollar expansion and renovation.

The library's large-scale vision for reimagining its building on Park Avenue includes an expansion of 4,000 new square feet of floor area, which triggered the needs for the two special approvals, according to Taylor Baxter, Glencoe's development services director.

Glencoe's zoning code was amended last year to only allow restaurant and retail uses on the ground floor in the village's B-1 zoning district. Because the library's use falls outside of those allowances, special-use approval for the project is required.

Additionally, the library needed special approval because, under village code, the size of its expansion requires at least eight new off-street parking spaces. The project also removes four current parking spaces, meaning the plans needed relief for a dozen spaces.

After two meetings in late 2025, Glencoe's Zoning Commission recommended approval of the library's request with conditions. Both recommended conditions sent back to the Village Board were "intended to help mitigate concerns about traffic and parking," Baxter said.

Zoning commissioners suggested that the library collaborate with the nearby Writers Theatre to minimize large-capacity-event conflicts, such as the organizations scheduling such events at the same time.

The commission also suggested encouraging library visitors attending larger events to use commuter lots east of Green Bay Road or access the library by means other than driving.

Commissioners also used the special-use guidelines previously approved in 2013 for the Writers Theatre as a framework for this decision, Baxter noted. He added that the commission ultimately decided the potential parking impact related to the library project would not be as intense as the Writers Theatre development's.

Trustees during the Feb. 19 meeting acknowledged the potential for parking challenges, but also let residents know that officials are [working to address parking concerns](#) in the immediate area.

"I think we should approve this," Village President Howard Roin said. "I would note that the village is working on what to do about parking uptown and we're continuing to work on that. One of the things we're looking at is to create a better connection from uptown Glencoe west of Green Bay to the east side. That is something we want to do in any event. I don't feel like it's the library's problem."

Roin concluded his remarks by assuring residents that the plan has to this point been deeply vetted.

"The library has an elected board, elected by the same folks that chose us and there is going to be a referendum on their plan, and their plan looks OK to me," he said. "I think we should get out of the way."

As [previously reported by *The Record*](#), the Glencoe Public Library is planning to expand its existing building southward on the east and west sides with a project that aims to create more versatile spaces, improve accessibility, and add sustainable and safe systems to the facility.

The expansion would take the building from 22,150 square feet to just over 26,000. Officials say in plan documents that the highest of the three proposed expansion areas is proposed to be the same height as the current building.

One of the central aspects of the plan is a 1,840-square-foot addition to the southwest side of the building that will serve as a "state-of-the-art Glencoe program and community room" and will hold up to 150 people, *The Record* previously reported.

A 1,000-square-foot addition is also proposed for the top floor of the library. That space will be mainly geared toward enhancing the library's children's services but could also be used as a "flex space." And the library's existing collections area would be reconfigured with a 1,000-square-foot addition.

Library officials have previously estimated the project's price tag at \$17.5 million. The overwhelming majority of funds would come from a bond issuance, only if voters approved, officials have said.

Glencoe voters this spring will be asked via referendum for their support on the bond sale, and while the result will be nonbinding, Roin, trustees and library leaders have repeatedly stated they will not move forward with the project if voters do not approve of it.

The village's plan commission is next slated to complete an exterior appearance review of the project later this month.

Renovation work could begin in late 2026 if the plans continue to move forward with a goal of completion by 2028.

The Record is a nonprofit, nonpartisan community newsroom that relies on reader support to fuel its independent local journalism.

Words like “uncertainty” and “unprecedented” took up significant space in the American lexicon in 2025. The Trump Administration’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) ran through federal agencies cutting budgets, personnel, and data; the President fired Dr. Carla Hayden from the Library of Congress; and he signed an executive order that would have resulted in the shutdown of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). While IMLS received a stay of execution thanks to a federal injunction, the library field has remained cautious, and as represented in *Library Journal*’s 2026 Budgets and Funding Survey, appears to be maintaining a conservative stance amid ongoing political upheaval and the resulting impacts on funding across all sectors.

SHIFTING SANDS

Funding trends in 2025 reflected an unsettled landscape, with few identifiable trends and many questions about what the future may hold

By April Witteveen

The Budgets and Funding Survey received responses from 288 U.S. public libraries between November 17 and December 31, 2025. While the annual survey receives responses from a different set of libraries each year, data is weighed by population served to minimize this variable. This year’s sample contains 22 percent urban libraries, 35 percent suburban, 40 percent small town, and 43 percent rural libraries (percentages total more than 100 as multibranch systems can report the demographics represented by their individual locations).

On first look, the numbers appear overwhelmingly positive: 62 percent of libraries anticipate an increase in total operating budgets in the upcoming fiscal year. With 7 percent planning on decreased budgets and 31 percent predicting that they will remain at status quo, this is only a +2.5 percent net change in anticipated overall budgets, compared to last year’s more optimistic +5.4 percent. Fifty-nine percent of respondents report an upcoming increase in materials budgets, but 24 percent anticipate a decrease—continuing a multiyear downward trend. Personnel budgets are also expected to grow across

April Witteveen is the library director at the Oregon State University—Cascades campus in Bend, OR.

a large majority of the sample (83 percent); however, the overall net change is effectively flat at -0.1 percent, marking a departure from prior years of stronger personnel budget growth.

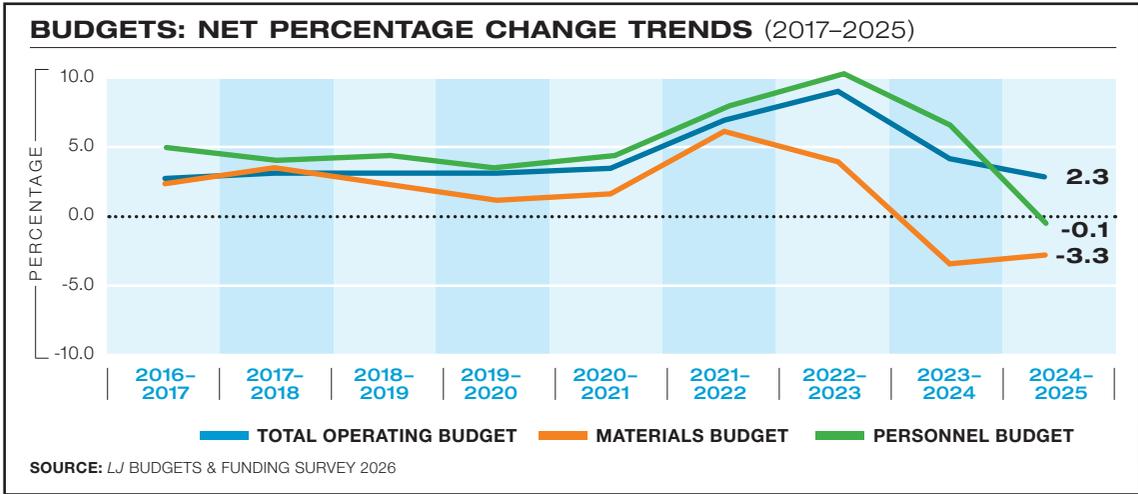
Each library in the survey faces its own unique funding landscape; legislative changes have had critical impact in states like Wyoming, where property taxes were cut by 25 percent, and Ohio, where a change in the state’s public library funding model resulted in a \$25 million shortfall. The volatile housing market has many library leaders waiting on edge for annual appraisal numbers, making long-term planning especially difficult. Pandemic-era grants have by and large been paid out and spent, with no other funding coming in to take the place of ARPA—which some libraries used to keep very basic services afloat. Independent library districts continue to outpace municipally funded libraries by 61 percent in operating budgets, 62 percent in materials, and 54 percent in personnel, but this golden standard of library structure could be increasingly challenging as anti-tax sentiment continues to shape political discourse and impact levy ballots.

Data also shows libraries are managing an interconnected triad of declining or condensed staffing, fewer open hours, and softening circulation. Budget priorities among the sample are strongly centered in payroll, staffing, and benefits (51 percent of responses list this as first priority), while programming, outreach, and staff development fall to the bottom of the list (three percent and one percent list these as first priorities, respectively). Given that this data analysis indicates a generally defensive budgeting posture, the next year in public libraries looks like focusing on protecting staff and scaled-down approaches to other discretionary spending, all while striving to meet the myriad informational and social needs of their communities.

CONTRACTION OVER EXPANSION

One of the biggest shifts seen in the sample this year is the marked reversal of grant funding; 28 percent of libraries reported decreases, leading to a net decline over last year of 17.1 percent. Last year’s survey had a net increase of 8.3 percent in grant funding. In 2025, libraries in the Northeast saw the largest net drop of all geographic U.S. regions, decreasing by 30.5 percent; in terms of community setting, rural libraries reported a 35.4 percent net decrease. A rural library in the Mountain West noted that “[the] IMLS grant freeze and end of grant periods explain the decrease in funding.” Because of the loss of grant money, this library saw a 60 percent drop in its materials budget. Another Mountain West library, this time in an urban community with a population base of 100,000–249,000, saw an overall operational budget decline owing to the expiration of pandemic-era ARPA grants, which had been funding a staff position in the library’s makerspace.

Of those 55 percent of libraries receiving grant monies in 2025, there was a significant move to fund programming and outreach (31 percent) compared to 2024’s grant spending focusing on materials, capital improvements, and technology, with only 18 percent of grant funds supporting program-



matic areas. This year’s open-ended responses include using these funds for “human services and programs,” such as the Right Serve at the Right Time statewide social services platform investment put in place by the Orange County Library System, FL, as noted by Director Steve Powell. Other grant-funded programs include summer reading initiatives, lunch at the library, teen humanities programming, and adult literacy. The trend indicates that grants are increasingly being used to support visible, community-facing initiatives rather than infrastructure or digital expansion.

Core funding for both independent and municipal libraries was stable overall. However, there are important markers indicating that when state funding cuts do occur, they tend to be deeper, outweighing incremental gains elsewhere. The most significant net change in state funding appears in the Mountain West, with a 41.2 percent drop. The Goshen County Library was hit hard when the Wyoming Legislature cut property taxes by 25 percent, with the potential for further cuts this year. “Our library is primarily funded through property taxes acquired by the county,” noted Director Cristine Braddy.

“The decrease in the overall budget was due to the decrease in property tax.” The library was hit with cuts to its materials, technology, and programming spending. To help fill in the loss, city commissioners “allocated funds directly for personnel to ensure we didn’t lose trained staff,” Braddy said, and the library’s foundation is running a “Library Sustainability Funding Challenge to increase the principal of our endowment.”

Ohio was also hit by legislative action: “Starting July 2025, the State of Ohio’s Public Library Fund was reduced by six percent and moved to a fixed line item vs. a percentage of monthly revenue,” according to one director. This library saw increases in both open hours and circulation, and anticipates a personnel budget increase of just over three percent; with the expectation of lessened revenue, only time will tell if those increases can be sustained.

Southern libraries, which in this sample include many large, urban systems, reported the highest increase in state funding at 41 percent. Tax base increases were noted in

the responses, as well as support from library-focused state funds in Florida and Oklahoma.

Northeastern libraries, overall leaning to suburban and small-town communities in the sample, showed the most stable level of state funding: 78 percent were unchanged year over year. One urban, independent Pennsylvania library district experienced a boost in state funding and saw an eight percent rise in circulation, an increase in revenue from its Friends organization, and an increase in outreach and programming activities. The library also received a state grant designed to support violence intervention and prevention in youth through after-school programming—an encouraging story of expansion amid so much contraction, but far from the norm.

Municipal library funding, or lack thereof, is subject to many variables. One small Texas library lost out on receiving a budget increase because of “money constraints within the city. There was a tax accessor change, and taxes were not collected in a timely matter.” In suburban New Jersey, Bernardsville Public Library Executive Director Mary Fran Daley noted at the end

of 2025 that budget uncertainty is a regular part of business: “We won’t know (about budget allocations) until the Council reorganizes in January and sets their annual budget. For this reason, I wish we had a July–June fiscal year, but we do not. We are asking for more due to skyrocketing health insurance costs, but we won’t have certainty on that until at least March.”

One area where libraries may be saving money is in advocacy spending; 50 percent fewer libraries reported allocating funds to advocacy or lobbying this year, down from 12 percent to six percent of respondents. While challenges to the freedom to read and punitive legislation continue to pose a threat, this decrease may reflect strained budgets and having to make choices that are more directly tied to service.

Some libraries are benefitting from new individual or corporate donations; nearly a quarter—24 percent—of the sample received donations compared to 21 percent in the previous year, and reported decreases fell drastically, with only four percent of libraries reporting a drop in corporate gifts in 2025, versus 12 percent in 2024.

SURVEY STATS

28% percent of libraries reported decreases in grant funding

THE TECHNOLOGY CYCLE

This year’s results on technology spending suggest a transition from large tech investments toward more incremental reinvestments, with an average spend down from \$467,187 to \$360,574. Large systems serving 500,000+ populations exceeded all other segments in technology spending, at an average of \$4.34 million, with 57 percent of those large libraries working with an increased budget—up from 33 percent last year. Switching the view to libraries serving fewer than 10,000 residents, technology spending increased

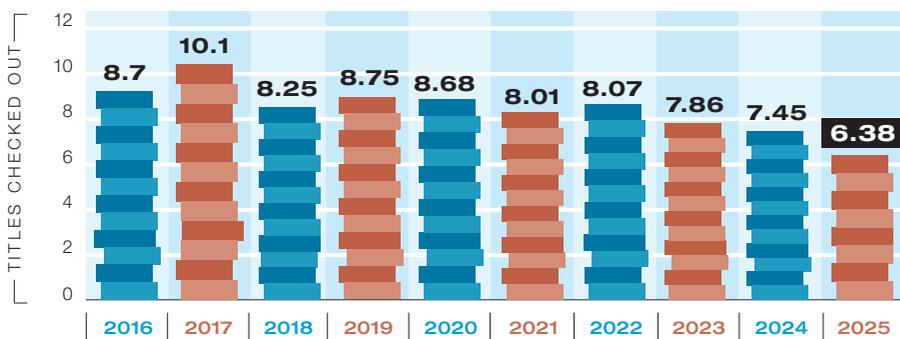
FUNDING THE DESIRE FOR DIGITAL

For many libraries, meeting the technological needs of their patrons also means moving toward more e-content and digital materials. Altogether this year’s sample spends an average of 28 percent of its materials budget on digital content; population segment is again a predictor for this level of spend. Ninety percent of libraries serving 500,000+ spend over 30 percent of their materials budget on digital, while fewer than a third (29 percent) of libraries serving less than 10,000 spend in the same ratio. The overall net change for digital materials

spending rose sharply this year, from an increase of 6.4 percent in 2024 to a 15 percent bump. Looking more closely at the breakdown, libraries serving 100,000–499,999 reported the highest share of increased digital spending, with 87 percent of respondents noting an increase.

It may be tempting to assume that these increases in spending mean equally increased access to more ebooks; however, 2025 saw multiple news stories about libraries being swamped by increasing digital license costs passed down from publishers. A July 2025 *Computers in Libraries* article (bit.ly/4qGSYAt) notes that “ebooks are now 3.63 times as expensive as print,” and that ebook licenses are evolving from a former perpetual-access model to more metered content, where an ebook or e-audio title can only circulate a limited number of times before a new license must be purchased. In the end, the article states, “keeping up with the demand for popular titles can...require considerable expense.” It’s clear that libraries are actively expanding digital spending, and likely reallocating dollars from physical materials purchases or from other discretionary categories, rather than finding an overall increase in operational budget.

AVERAGE PER CAPITA CIRCULATION TRENDS (2016–2025)*



*Trending averages based on 2016 through 2025 *LJ* Budgets & Funding surveys, with different response pools each year.

SOURCE: *LJ* BUDGETS & FUNDING SURVEY 2026

(\$9,268 to \$10,906), but these numbers highlight the differences in scale, which can lead to the categorization of libraries into technological haves and have-nots.

Enterprise software makes up the largest portion of tech spending (an average of 33 percent), followed by hardware (25 percent) and other software such as upgrades (16 percent). Large hardware investments came in at just six percent of library budgets, primarily seen in the segments serving 25,000–49,999 and 100,000–499,999. Responses noted new purchases like self-serve kiosks, automation such as integrated library systems (ILSs), and memory labs where visitors can scan or transform old media types to digital files. These purchases suggest specific, project-based investments. There is strong data in the survey from libraries across demographics and communities increasing the number of public PCs or adding loanable laptops, indicating that all libraries continue to serve the ongoing need of connecting their residents to computers.

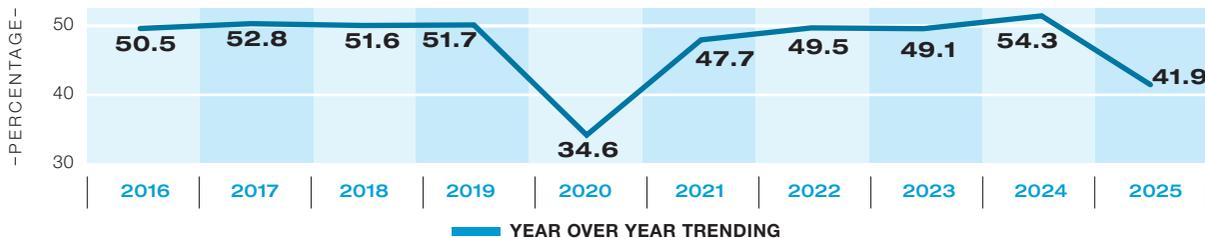
Spending on new software purchases and upgrades declined overall from 19 percent to 16 percent, but remains a critical part of tech budgets in the largest library systems, where it represents 27 percent of technology spending.

While spending on personnel and benefits sits as the top priority for this year’s sample, the average number of full-time employees (FTEs) per system declined from 54.1 in 2024 to 47.1 in 2025. Going back to 2016, the average FTE stood at 63. Multibranch libraries may be rebalancing staff across locations, indicated by a growth in average FTEs per location (from 12.6 in 2024 to 14.8 in 2025) instead of expanding overall system staffing. The average spend per FTE declined

DROPS IN STAFF, HOURS, AND CIRCULATION

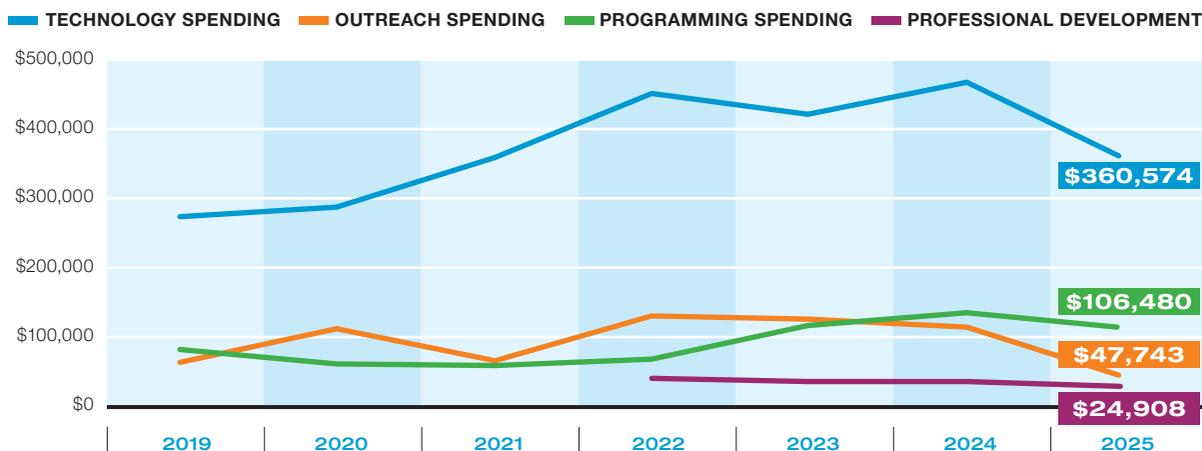
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LIBRARY OPEN HOURS (AVERAGE) PER WEEK (2016–2025)



SOURCE: *LJ* BUDGETS & FUNDING SURVEY 2026

SPENDING TRENDS (2019–2025)*



*Trending averages based on 2019 through 2025 *LJ* Budgets & Funding surveys, with different response pools each year.

SOURCE: *LJ* BUDGETS & FUNDING SURVEY 2026

for the second straight year (\$73,390 to \$72,168), a figure that highlights how wage and benefit growth in the field is not keeping pace with increases to the cost of living. Professional development (PD) remains a necessary investment for most libraries in the sample, with 91 percent reporting some level of PD spending and even the smallest libraries reporting high participation in PD offerings (80 percent). Regardless, the overall spend on PD is softening, with 17 percent of libraries reporting a decrease.

Workforce reduction due to retirements means some positions are lost to attrition, saving money for the library but lowering the FTE count. On the other hand, a suburban Northeast municipal system benefited from “county human resources implementing a salary and compensation adjustment in addition to a cost-of-living adjustment, resulting in significant increases to personnel costs.” This would be applied to current FTEs, not necessarily an indication of increased hiring. Overall, fewer library workforces are expanding, with 14 percent reporting decreases, up from an eight percent personnel contraction last year.

It’s not surprising that with these staffing challenges, the survey reveals a drop from 54.3 open hours to 41.9. This demonstrates a reduced service level compared with prior benchmarks. Some stabilization is evident, as nearly nine in 10 libraries report no change in open hours.

Per capita circulation can be closely tied to both personnel and open hours—if a library isn’t staffed, it can’t be open, and if it’s not open, items are not being checked out. Average per capita circulation declined this year, from 7.45 to 6.38,

continuing a downward trend that hasn’t recovered since the pandemic. Midwestern libraries report a stronger average circ at nine items per capita, with suburban libraries in general showing the strongest numbers. Libraries in the Northeast had the most significant decline, from 8.32 to 3.09, though their open hours only decreased by two percent. Analysis suggests that user behavior, format preferences, and service models, as well as fewer open library hours, have shifted more permanently to impact physical checkouts.

TRENDS TO WATCH

In early 2026, it’s clear that uncertainty will continue to influence library budgets. Will restrictive anti-freedom to read legislation result in pockets of retributive fiscal cuts? Will private philanthropy step up and into the library funding space?

IMLS is releasing its next round of full grant funding, which is a positive story—however, the director is a Trump administration appointee without any library or museum background. Some fear a new recession and drops in property values, while other communities are in the middle of a housing boom, resulting in higher revenue—for now.

The high degree of uncertainty in all areas means that, currently, budgeting is as much an art as a science. The one constant, however, is that libraries will continue to meet an increasingly critical role in the lives of their communities—providing connectivity, education, literacy, information, and a wide range of lifelines—and continue to serve as careful stewards of the resources they have to work with. ■

METHODOLOGY

Library Journal’s Budgets & Funding Survey is conducted annually to provide an overview of the financial health of U.S. public libraries. The questions focus on operating, materials, and personnel budgets, as well as funding sources, spending trends, and statistics about circulation, service hours, and staffing. The survey was emailed to a sample of U.S. public library directors and financial administrators on November 17, 2025, with a reminder email sent on November 27. A drawing to win one of three \$100 Visa® electronic gift cards was offered as an incentive.

The field closed on January 10. A total of 288 libraries answered this year. Duplicate responses from the same library system/district were removed. Tabulation and analysis were conducted by *Library Journal* research. Data analysis and insight development followed a hybrid approach led by human tabulation, interpretation, and framing, supported by AI-assisted synthesis. Survey responses come from a different set of libraries each year, which can affect trending. To minimize impacts, data is weighted by population served to even out fluctuations in respondent sample sizes and subgroups.

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The Best Books This Spring According to Your Librarians

Fiction

***The Future Saints* by Ashley Winstead**

This emotionally charged rock 'n' roll love story is set in the richly evoked world of the music business, featuring dual points of view: Theo Ford, the manager sent by the record company to deal with their problematic indie rock group, the Future Saints; and Hannah Cortland, the troubled lead singer of the band, who has been reeling since the death of her younger sister.

FICTION WINSTEAD

***You & Me and You & Me and You & Me* by Josie Lloyd and Emlyn Rees**

A long-married couple stuck in a rut finds a time machine that allows them to relive crucial moments from their lives. Soon they're making small changes to their relationship, then larger changes to the future, then huge changes behind each other's backs in a desperate attempt to get things right this time.

FICTION LLOYD

***The Heir Apparent* by Rebecca Armitage**

Lexi Villiers, a British princess who's stepped away from her royal role to carve out a quiet life in Australia, finds herself suddenly next in line for the throne after her father and twin brother are unexpectedly killed in a skiing accident. Her grandmother, the Queen, gives her one year to decide whether to accept her destiny.

FICTION ARMITAGE

***Twice* by Mitch Albom**

Albom returns with the story of Alfie Logan, who has the magical ability to do things over. He can rewind any moment and live it again—except for love; in that case, if he undoes it once, it is gone forever.

FICTION ALBOM

***Skylark* by Paula McLain**

McLain's riveting latest combines the stories of a 17th-century prison break and a WWII physician's role in the French Resistance. These two urgent stories of survival, set nearly 300 years apart, are connected by treks through Paris' ancient underground tunnels.

FICTION MCLAIN

***Keeper of Lost Children* by Sadeqa Johnson**

Set between post-WWII Germany and 1960s America, this novel toggles back and forth in time, telling the stories of three people who are connected in unexpected ways. Inspired by the real experiences of mixed-race children abandoned after WWII, Johnson sheds light on a little-known chapter of postwar history, highlighting the importance of resilience, courage, and love.

FICTION JOHNSON

***This Is Not About Us* by Allegra Goodman**

In the opening scene of this linked story collection, Sylvia and Helen Rubinstein are unmoored when their beloved younger sister passes away, and a misunderstanding about apple cake at the funeral reception turns into decades of stubborn silence. Subsequent stories describe branches of the sprawling Rubinstein clan as they navigate the sisters' feud and everything else life throws at them.

FICTION GOODMAN

***The Rest of Our Lives* by Ben Markovits**

When Tom Layward's wife had an affair twelve years ago, he resolved to leave her as soon as his youngest child left the nest. Now, while driving his college-bound daughter to Pittsburgh, he remembers his promise to himself. So, rather than returning to his wife, Tom keeps driving west, reflecting on his past while moving towards a future he hasn't even envisioned yet.

FICTION MARKOVITS

***Lost Lambs* by Madeline Cash**

This offbeat debut novel follows a suburban family of five unspooling at the seams, each going to increasingly absurd lengths to find belonging in a different flock.

FICTION CASH

***The Elsewhere Express* by Samantha Sotto Yambao**

Q is an artist losing his sight, and Raya is a former songwriter who lost her way when her brother died. One day, the two of them board a train and find themselves on the Elsewhere Express, a train built of lost daydreams, scattered thoughts, grudges, and emotions that helps its passengers find their purpose.

SCI FI SOTTO

***The Hospital at the End of the World* by Justin C. Key**

In the near future, medical student Pok is hoping to attend a prestigious medical center operated by artificial intelligence. But when his father dies of a mysterious illness, he decides to train at the last hospital still practicing human-led medicine instead, hoping to learn more about his father's death.

SCI FI KEY

Mystery & Thriller

***A Sociopath's Guide to a Successful Marriage* by M. K. Oliver**

Oliver's satirical debut introduces Lalla Rook, a suburban mother who casually murders an intruder in her kitchen to avoid disrupting her son's fourth birthday party. Narrated by Lalla, the story unveils her chillingly pragmatic approach to life, focusing on manipulation, blackmail, and even murder to secure wealth, social status, and a successful marriage.

FICTION OLIVER

***Missing Sam* by Thrity Umrigar**

An ill-timed fall during a morning run shatters the lives of English professor Sam O'Malley and her wife, Ali Mirza, in this engrossing thriller that doubles as a moving meditation on otherness.

FICTION UMRIGAR

***In Her Defense* by Philippa Malicka**

As a sensational celebrity libel trial unfolds, a young woman at the periphery secretly wields the power to make or break the case. But with her own hidden past, will she dare to speak up?

FICTION MALICKA

***The Final Score* by Don Winslow**

Characters wrestle with the costs of loyalty and the burdens of familial responsibility in this collection of six short novellas from Winslow. From a group planning a casino heist to a good man forced to unleash his dark side, these stories feature vividly realized characters, morally ambiguous situations, and pitch-perfect dialogue.

FICTION WINSLOW

***I'm Not the Only Murderer in My Retirement Home* by Fergus Craig**

After a decades-long stint in prison, former serial killer Carol is looking to kick back and relax in her new retirement home—until a fellow resident dies and Carol has to prove she actually didn't do it this time.

MYSTERY CRAIG

***The Midnight Taxi* by Yosha Gunasekera**

New York City taxi driver Siri picks up a passenger headed to JFK, only to discover once they arrive that the man has been murdered in her backseat. Suddenly Siri is the prime suspect for murder and has five days to discover the truth behind the impossible crime before she goes in front of a grand jury.

MYSTERY GUNASEKERA

***The Murder at World's End* by Ross Montgomery**

This entertaining locked-room whodunit set in 1910 in England features an eccentric viscount who believes the world is coming to an end with the arrival of Halley's Comet. When the viscount is found murdered, his scientifically minded great-aunt and a newly hired footman form an unorthodox detective duo to solve the crime.

MYSTERY MONTGOMERY

***Good Intentions* by Marisa Walz**

Luxury party planner Cady's life is upended when her twin sister, Dana, is seriously injured in a car crash. While at the hospital, a brief chance encounter with a woman in the waiting room sparks a snowballing obsession in this psychological suspense debut.

FICTION WALZ

***The Storm* by Rachel Hawkins**

Bestselling Hawkins uses multiple points of view, mixed media, and alternating timelines to craft a gripping suspense novel featuring a journalist who arrives in a small Alabama tourist town to investigate a mysterious death that occurred during a hurricane over forty years ago.

FICTION HAWKINS

***All the Little Houses* by May Cobb**

It's East Texas in the 1980s, and mother-daughter duo Charleigh and Nellie Anderson rule the social scene. But when farm girl Jane Swift arrives in town, Nellie's world is thrown into a tailspin at the perceived threat to her social status, something Nellie will do anything to protect.

FICTION COBB

Nonfiction & Biography

Neptune's Fortune: The Billion-Dollar Shipwreck and the Ghosts of the Spanish Empire

By Julian Sancton

The riveting true story of a legendary Spanish galleon that sunk off the coast of Colombia with over \$1 billion in gold and silver—and one man's obsessive quest to find it.

910.452 SAN

***Island at the Edge of the World: The Forgotten History of Easter Island* by Mike Pitts**

This vital and timely work of historical adventure from archaeologist Pitts rewrites the popular yet flawed history of Rapa Nui and uses newly unearthed findings to challenge the long-standing historical assumptions about the manmade ecological disaster that caused the island's collapse.

996.18 PIT

Humor Me: How Laughing More Can Make You Present, Creative, Connected, and Happy

By Chris Duffy

Comedy is as essential to a healthy and happy life as diet and exercise, according to this illuminating debut from comedian Duffy. Mixing personal anecdotes with research and expert interviews, he outlines the key pillars of good humor and analyzes how humor underpins different areas of life.

818.6 DUF

***100 Rules for Living to 100: An Optimist's Guide to a Happy Life* by Dick Van Dyke**

On the eve of his 100th birthday, Van Dyke brings us this autobiographical collection of stories, reflections, and advice on how he's maintained a zest for life. Offering poignant reflections on aging and health, he encourages readers to stay true to their passions and to find joy by spreading joy.

BIOG VAN DYKE VAN

***Everybody Loses: The Tumultuous Rise of American Sports Gambling* by Danny Funt**

In this eye-opening debut investigation, reporter Funt digs into the rise of American sports betting. He delves into the history, politics, and the companies involved, and his in-depth reporting includes interviews with many industry employees, gamblers, and athletes.

795.09 FUN

***Football* by Chuck Klosterman**

Journalist Klosterman presents an entertaining cultural history of football. Approaching the subject with rigor and drawing on his lifelong fascination with the game, he sheds light on the sport's outsized and underrated role in shaping contemporary culture, resulting in a smart, rewarding consideration of America's favorite sport.

796.332 KLO

***Homeschooled: A Memoir* by Stefan Merrill Block**

In the vein of Tara Westover's *Educated*, novelist Block delivers a wrenching account of his traumatic homeschooling in suburban Texas and his complex relationship with his mother. Through this poignant memoir that seamlessly blends humor, anger, and sadness, readers will appreciate Block's journey from homeschooling to adulthood.

BIOG BLOCK BLO

***Strangers: A Memoir of a Marriage* by Belle Burden**

Burden's debut memoir explores the emotional journey she embarked upon after her husband of two decades unexpectedly left her in the early weeks of the pandemic in 2020. This detailed narrative of what happens after the end of a marriage recounts the many pathways Burden traveled to understand what happened and to begin building a new life.

BIOG BURDEN BUR

***Ain't Nobody's Fool: The Life and Times of Dolly Parton* by Martha Ackmann**

This larger-than-life new biography of country music legend and philanthropist Dolly Parton takes a deep dive into the social, historical, and personal forces that made her one of the most beloved figures in public life. Features interviews with friends, family members, Nashville neighbors, band members, producers, and many others, along with never-before-seen photographs.

781.642 PARTON ACK

Bonus Books

***Is This a Cry for Help?* by Emily Austin**

Librarian Darcy comes back to work after a mental breakdown only to confront book-banning crusaders in an empowering story of grief, love, and the power of libraries.

FICTION AUSTIN

***One & Only* by Maurene Goo**

Workaholic matchmaker Cassia Park has a remarkable gift: she can read clients' faces to see the love connections they've made in past lives and thus determine who will be their "fated" match in this one. Cassia has been searching for her own match for ten years and starts to worry she may never find him.

FICTION GOO

***How to Commit a Postcolonial Murder* by Nina McConigley**

A coming-of-age story set in 1986 about an Indian American girl struggling to figure out many things about herself, such as whether she and her sister should kill a relative. From the beginning, the reader knows the killing will take place, and the bulk of this wittily observant and achingly tender novel explores the lead-up to the crime and the sisters' relationship.

FICTION MCCONIGLEY

***Evil Genius* by Claire Oshetsky**

In this sly, darkly funny novel, a young woman becomes increasingly obsessed with tales of love and death and begins subconsciously plotting to murder her abusive husband.

FICTION OSHETSKY

***Wolf Hour* by Jo Nesbo**

In 2016 Minneapolis, disgraced homicide detective Bob Oz probes the attempted murder of a crooked gun dealer, an inquiry that develops into a serial killer investigation as more bodies pile up. Six years later, Norwegian crime fiction writer Holger Rudi comes to Minnesota to research the story.

MYSTERY NESBO

***Fly, Wild Swans: My Mother, Myself and China* by Jung Chang**

Chang continues the story of her family's life in China which she began in 1991's *Wild Swans*, tracing the history of modern China through the stories of three generations of women in her family.

BIOG CHANG CHA

***Eat Your Ice Cream: Six Simple Rules for a Long and Healthy Life* by Ezekiel Emanuel**

Everyone wants to live a full and healthy life, but every day brings a tidal wave of attention-grabbing misinformation, bizarre fads, and questionable advice from influencers. Dr. Emanuel cuts through the noise to help us consider which lifestyle changes are worth making and how to easily implement them.

ON ORDER

***A World Appears: A Journey Into Consciousness* by Michael Pollan**

In Pollan's exploration of consciousness, he discovers a world far deeper and stranger than our everyday reality. Eye-opening and mind-expanding, Pollan invites us to explore our own minds to more meaningfully connect with the world and our deepest selves.

128.2 POL

Why can't my library buy more e-books and audiobooks?

e-book and digital audiobook costs are too high for libraries, and access is limited.

It's unsustainable for libraries to continue to purchase digital content this way.

Publishers put limits on library e-books & e-audiobooks



Print books are owned by the library and can be used for decades until they're worn out.

e-books and digital audiobooks are licensed—libraries don't own them.

Plus, publishers put limits on how long the content can be used:

 1 or 2 years *or*  26 or 52 checkouts

Once that limit is reached, libraries need to re-purchase the license at the same inflated price if they want to keep offering it to their community.

e-Content usage is increasing

In 2024, a mid-size, suburban public library saw:

 **25%**

increase in e-book circulation

 **15%**

increase in audiobook circulation

Source: Warren-Newport Public Library

They're free for patrons to use, but not free for libraries to offer.

An average e-book costs a library **3.9x more** than what you would pay to buy it on your Kindle.



Source: ReadersFirst

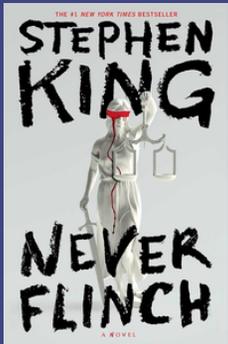
The cost per circulation of an electronic title is **3.7x higher** than a physical title.



Source: Fremont Public Library

Let's see some real-time examples:

*library costs reflect single user, 2-year limit agreement

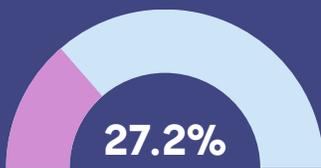


Format	Consumer Cost	Library Cost
	\$32.00	\$32.00
	\$16.99	\$67.99
	\$19.99	\$84.99



Format	Consumer Cost	Library Cost
	\$32.00	\$29.00
	\$14.99	\$55.00
	\$14.99	\$95.00

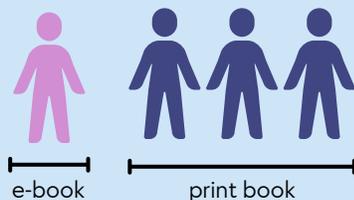
Sources: TS360, The Palace Marketplace, Amazon, and Apple Books



Source: LibraryJournal

Libraries spend nearly **one-third of their budget** on digital content so their patrons can enjoy these popular titles.

Three people could check out the same print book for **less than the cost of a single e-book checkout.**



How does this affect my community?



Hold wait lists will get even longer

Your wait times will increase



You'll have limited options

Libraries can't afford to buy the content your community wants



Libraries will reach their budget breaking point

Providing you with less for your tax dollars



Illinois is known for its leadership in support of libraries, but...

if publishers continue to control the terms of digital content for libraries, we'll see an erosion of resource sharing across the state. **We will lose one of the best things that makes Illinois stand out in the national library landscape.**

How you can help

Keep borrowing e-content from your library

The numbers help us advocate for funding

Stay informed and support your library-serving organizations:

American Library Association
 Illinois Library Association
 Reaching Across Illinois Library System

What is HB5236?

the

Digital Library Protection Act

Why libraries love it

It works to **help our libraries and save tax dollars**. In its current form, the bill basically says that when publishers license e-books and digital audiobooks to libraries, they **can no longer set unreasonable prices** and **restrictive terms that obstruct** libraries' ability to function normally.

Why publishers hate it

For years, **major publishers** have been using their exorbitant library e-book prices to **line their pockets with taxpayer dollars**. This bill would put a stop to that in **Illinois and several other states with trigger laws** addressing the same issue.

More Information

Learn more about this issue by scanning the QR code here or visiting www.ila.org/advocacy/ready-set-advocate-ebook-legislation



on average, your
**LIBRARY PAYS
4X MORE**
than you for
**THE SAME
E-BOOK**

HB5236 Protects

equity

Astronomical e-book prices **throttle access** at libraries in **impoverished communities**, furthering **inequity**.

privacy

Publishers enforce checkout limits with **tech that collects data on e-book readers**—a violation of **patron privacy** and Illinois law.

accessibility

Digital lending is often **the only way to access library materials** for working parents, rural students, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees
360 E. Deerpath Road, Lake Forest, IL, 60045

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

In the absence of President Jackson, Vice President Desmond welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order on February 17, 2026 at 6:35 pm in the Kasian Room.

ROLL CALL

Vice President JoAnn Desmond, Trustee John Johnson, Trustee Garth Pearson, Trustee Robert Shaw, Trustee Vince Sparrow, Trustee Heather Strong, Trustee Emily Van Bel (arrived at 6.37 pm). A quorum was present.

Trustees absent: President Josh Jackson, Trustee Jim Clifton.

Library Staff present: Ishwar Laxminarayan, Heidi Krueger, Assistant Director, Jim Lee, Building Superintendent, Kate Buckardt, Adult Services Manager, Leo Hamza, Business Manager and John Lacson, Media Lab Specialist.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Vice President Desmond noted that she was eagerly looking forward to a productive discussion on several interesting topics at today's meeting.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Sparrow complimented staff on a well-organized chocolate program.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Jan Gibson, representing the Friends of the Lake Forest Library, provided an update on artwork restoration efforts supported by the Friends. Four pieces of artwork have been restored, including a page from a Bible translation that dates back to 1535. Restoration efforts included cleaning, restoring color, and stabilizing the artwork. The work was completed using remaining funds previously allocated for restoration.

Trustee Shaw inquired whether the restoration would affect the overall appraisal value of the collection. Ms. Gibson noted that restoration will likely increase the appraisal value of the items. Trustee Pearson asked about the use of specialized glass or other conservation measures to protect the artwork. Trustees Van Bel and Strong noted that the Vinci Hamp proposal for the 1931 Rooms project includes a line item for artwork restoration and protective window film to mitigate environmental damage.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT AND PATRON COMMENTS

Director Laxminarayan reviewed several patron comments, highlighting the many praises received for the library's extended hours and food offerings during Exam Escape. He also shared appreciation for staff efforts during Exam Escape, particularly highlighting the supportive environment created for students. Mr. Laxminarayan noted that there will be a final city recommendation expected late January with regards to parking.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Omnibus Consent Agenda was presented. Trustee Sparrow made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Trustee Pearson seconded the motion.

The following voted "Aye": Trustees Desmond, Johnson, Pearson, Shaw, Sparrow, Strong and Van Bel. The following voted "Nay": none. 7-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Exterior Courtyard Rehabilitation- Phase I

The committee is preparing for the spring kickoff of construction activities. Berglund Construction is expected to return at the end of February to begin work on the doors. Furniture has been ordered, and the project is still targeting a May 1, 2026 completion date.

1931 Historic Rooms Revitalization

Trustee Strong reviewed the preliminary cost estimate summary, noting that the estimate separates the project costs from design and construction contingencies due to the size and complexity of the project. The Building Committee anticipates that the contingency amounts may ultimately be higher than necessary but are included as a prudent placeholder. The Board will vote on a formal architectural fee proposal once received from Vinci Hamp. Following receipt of the proposal, the Board will schedule another public meeting to present the final design. Trustee Johnson asked for clarification regarding the scope of work and the expected finished product.

Trustee Strong reviewed the planned improvements, which include:

- Updated wayfinding throughout the building
- Custom furniture designed to respond to patron and staff requests
- New paint and restored historic finishes
- Acoustic plaster to reduce sound transmission
- New walk-off mats and carpeting
- Refurbishment of historic photographs
- Supplemental lighting
- Updated desks and staff work areas
- Restoration of fireplaces
- Select artwork restoration

Trustee Van Bel noted that the design approach aims to be future proof, avoiding a dated aesthetic while honoring the building's historic character.

Trustee Pearson asked whether the Reed Room would be included in the renovation. Trustee Strong noted that it is not included, as it is better suited for consideration in a future Phase Three project. Trustee Shaw asked whether oversized conduit would be installed to allow for future electrical expansion. Trustee Strong noted that Vinci Hamp has been evaluating long-term electrical capacity needs. Trustee Johnson asked what steps might be needed to increase electrical capacity and flexibility for future upgrades. Trustee Strong noted that the project's lighting consultant will help evaluate those requirements. Trustee Shaw also asked for clarification regarding contingency cost calculations, which Trustee Strong explained.

Lake Forest Garden Club Grant

Vice President Desmond reported that the Lake Forest Garden Club has awarded a grant to fund a master landscape plan design for the library grounds. Trustee Van Bel provided an update on the status of the grant process. Trustee Strong noted that the Board was being asked to formally accept the gift.

Trustee Johnson made a motion to graciously accept the grant. Trustee Shaw seconded the motion. Voice vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PARKING REGULATIONS

Director Laxminarayan provided an update on proposed parking regulations for the Central Business District. The City waited until completion of the Deerpath streetscape project before implementing a new parking plan. Under the new ordinance:

- A row of 90-minute parking spaces across from the library will be designated specifically for library patrons.
- Overnight parking will be relocated to improve daytime availability.
- Parking will be monitored using a new electronic enforcement system.

The city has committed to continuing to accommodate additional parking needs during special library events. The new parking system will begin as a pilot program starting May 1.

OTHER PROJECTS UPDATES

Building Superintendent Jim Lee offered updates on the following:

Boiler Replacement

Mr. Lee reported that Hill Mechanical has begun installation of the new boiler, with completion expected by the end of the week.

HVAC Noise Mitigation

The Kasian Room HVAC system is being evaluated to reduce noise caused by the ductwork during programming events.

Structural Assessment

Engineering firm WJE will conduct a structural audit of the building to assess the structure's capacity to support future Phase Three improvements.

FINANCE COMMITTEE
FY2027 BUDGET

Finance Committee Chair Trustee Sparrow presented the draft FY2027 budget. Many revenue projections remain relatively predictable. The greater challenge lies in forecasting capital expenditures and determining the timing and availability of donations and other funding sources. Trustee Sparrow noted that the draft budget is strong but will continue to evolve as planning progresses. The budget currently anticipates a reduction in the library's cash balance by the end of FY2027, primarily due to capital investments. Trustee Johnson noted that the Finance Committee has asked Director Laxminarayan to evaluate staff compensation to ensure that employees remain competitively compensated.

FUNDRAISING

Vice President Desmond discussed the creation of a new advisory committee dedicated to capital campaign fundraising. Director Laxminarayan noted that ongoing discussions are focused on determining which projects should be considered one-time improvements versus those that are better incorporated into a future Phase Three renovation. Although the library has underspent in certain areas over the past several years, the current planning efforts are laying the groundwork for larger capital investments in the coming years.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY FUNDING REQUEST

Director Laxminarayan presented the Friends of the Library's FY2027 funding request totaling \$55,000.

The funding would be divided into two primary areas:

- Support for library programming and reading initiatives
- Digitization of Lake Forest local history materials, including periodicals, board meeting minutes, and historic photographs

The Friends also expressed interest in contributing to the 1931 Historic Rooms revitalization project. Trustee Strong asked whether there was flexibility in the annual funding request. Director Laxminarayan noted that the library maintains a programming budget and suggested reserving the Friends' larger contributions for the 1931 Rooms project.

Trustee Johnson made a motion to approve the Friends' funding request as presented. Trustee Shaw seconded the motion. Voice vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Director Laxminarayan highlighted the continued success of Exam Escape, which has received very positive feedback from students and families. Staff are evaluating alternatives to the current print-management system and reviewing potential replacements. Additional programming highlights include a Young Adult potato chip tasting contest and the upcoming Books and Bites event at Elawa Farm. Library usage metrics remain strong, and the library is returning to more consistent availability of print materials while also increasing investment in electronic collections.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 17, 2026

NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Johnson asked that the Board discuss the library's plans for the United States' 250th anniversary celebration at a future meeting. Director Laxminarayan noted that the library is participating in a community coalition with other city organizations planning a multi-day celebration. The celebration will take place July 1–4, culminating with a community event at the beach on July 4.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Next Schedule Meeting: Regular Board Meeting, Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

Emily Van Bel, Secretary
Submitted for approval by the Board on March 17, 2026



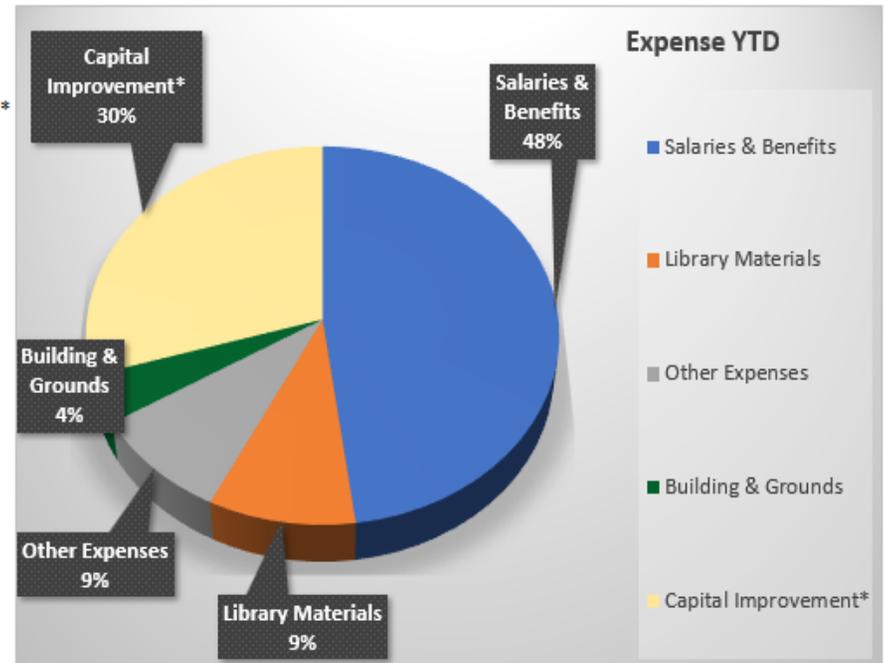
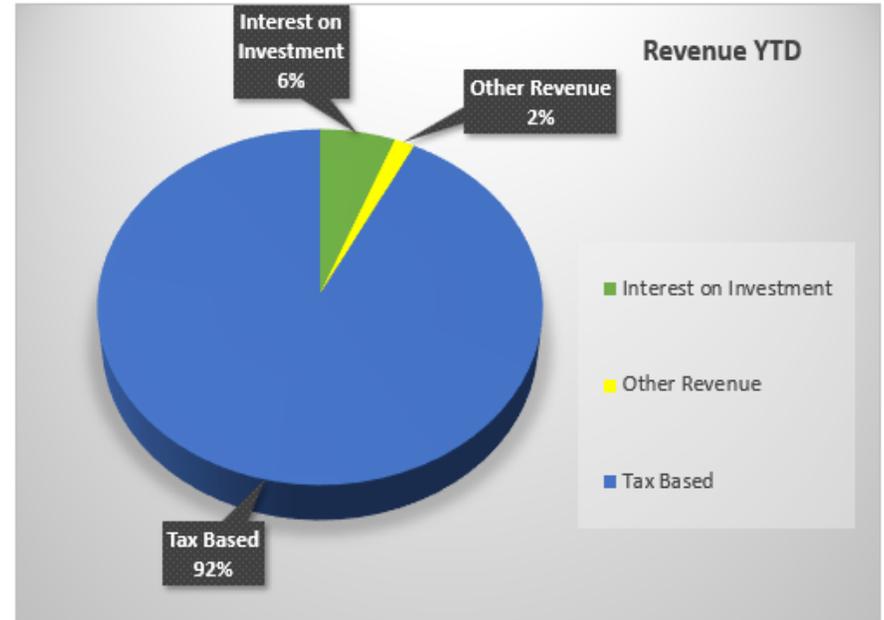
FY2026 Revenue & Expenditure Statement
February 2026 (Month 10)

Revenues	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	Budget Realized
Property Tax Based	5,178,237	5,180,869	5,180,869	100%
Other Tax Based	75,566	60,833	73,000	104%
Gifts & Grants	36,609	8,333	10,000	366%
Library Generated	18,583	20,000	24,000	77%
Friends of Lake Forest Library	35,251	50,000	60,000	59%
Interest on Investment	333,648	291,667	350,000	95%
Total Revenues	5,677,895	5,611,702	5,697,869	100%

Expenses	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	Budget Utilized
Salary & Wages	1,830,634	1,935,548	2,322,657	79%
Benefits	601,368	706,187	847,424	71%
Library Materials	472,013	625,000	750,000	63%
Other Expenses	454,032	743,415	892,098	51%
Contractual Services Library*	229,894	341,833	410,200	56%
Other*	224,138	401,582	481,898	47%
Building & Grounds	206,933	332,829	399,395	52%
Capital Improvement*	1,507,676	3,083,333	3,700,000	41%
Total Expenses	5,072,656	7,426,312	8,911,574	57%

Reserves	
Reserve - Capital Improvements	3,000,000
Reserve - Technology Improvements	500,000
Capital Equipment	500,000
Fund Balance - Unassigned	5,160,948
Total Reserve Amount	\$ 9,160,948

*Detail on pages 5 & 6 of the report





FY2026 Revenue & Expenditure Statement
February - 2026 (Month 10)

Revenues	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD	Budget	Budget Realized
Property Tax Based	534,505	2,084,237	189,563	122,177	1,269,365	779,747	198,615	-	28	-	5,178,237	5,180,869	100%
Other Tax Based	12,154	-	8,762	30,072	-	9,072	-	7,187	-	8,320	75,566	73,000	104%
Gifts & Grants	25	100	5,650	-	1,750	8,070	15,014	1,000	5,000	-	36,609	10,000	366%
Library Generated	1,424	4,464	1,690	2,244	1,149	1,518	2,915	412	715	2,053	18,583	24,000	77%
Friends of Lake Forest Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35,251	-	-	35,251	60,000	59%
Interest on Investment	23,665	9,053	31,099	86,791	-	64,813	37,541	4,390	29,141	47,153	333,648	350,000	95%
Total Revenues	\$571,773	\$2,097,854	\$236,765	\$241,284	\$1,272,264	\$863,220	\$254,085	\$48,240	\$34,884	\$57,526	\$5,677,895	\$5,697,869	100%

Expenses	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD	Budget	Budget Utilized
Salary & Wages	104,312	168,438	168,761	249,840	177,425	172,051	172,587	175,823	261,658	179,737	1,830,634	2,322,657	79%
Benefits	48,174	53,167	53,183	67,357	60,631	57,910	57,136	55,141	73,752	74,917	601,368	847,424	71%
Library Materials	45,832	71,447	49,540	50,570	46,653	30,659	48,203	36,597	47,617	44,895	472,013	750,000	63%
Other Expenses	55,239	47,597	39,752	60,999	29,830	51,606	32,556	33,950	61,717	40,787	454,032	892,098	51%
<i>Contractual Services Library</i>	37,841	12,950	11,542	31,223	14,474	37,172	13,270	14,516	44,547	12,358	229,894	410,200	56%
<i>Other</i>	17,398	34,646	28,210	29,776	15,356	14,434	19,285	19,434	17,170	28,428	224,138	481,898	47%*
Building & Grounds	63,384	14,249	12,749	17,447	18,361	11,259	12,905	15,904	23,077	17,598	206,933	399,395	52%

Total Operating Expenses	316,940	354,898	323,985	446,214	332,900	323,485	323,387	317,415	467,821	357,935	3,564,980	5,211,574	68%
Capital Improvement	-	43,915	4,219	14,805	315,244	339,766	259,796	69,971	399,296	60,665	1,507,676	3,700,000	41%
Total Expenses	\$316,940	\$398,813	\$328,205	\$461,019	\$648,144	\$663,252	\$583,183	\$387,386	\$867,117	\$418,599	5,072,656	8,911,574	57%

Excess / (Deficit)	\$254,833	\$1,699,041	(\$91,440)	(\$219,735)	\$624,120	\$199,969	(\$329,098)	(\$339,145)	(\$832,233)	(\$361,073)	605,239	(\$3,213,705)
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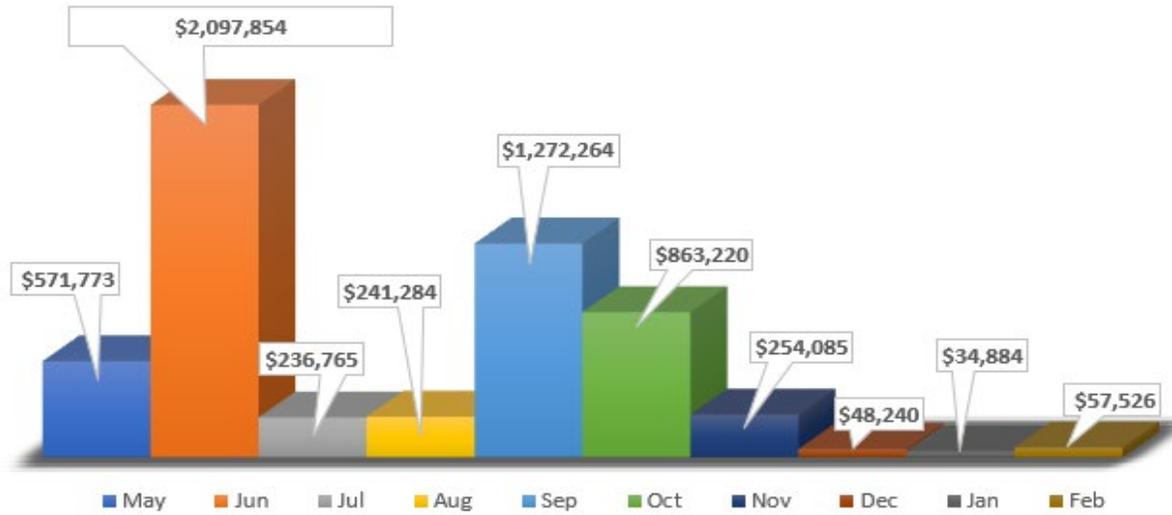
Reserves

\$5,160,948 - Operating cash reserve (fund balance-unassigned). The library's restricted reserves, approved, passed and adopted by the Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees on the 15th day of April 2025, currently total \$4,000,000: capital improvements (\$3,000,000), capital equipment (\$500,000), and technology (\$500,000).

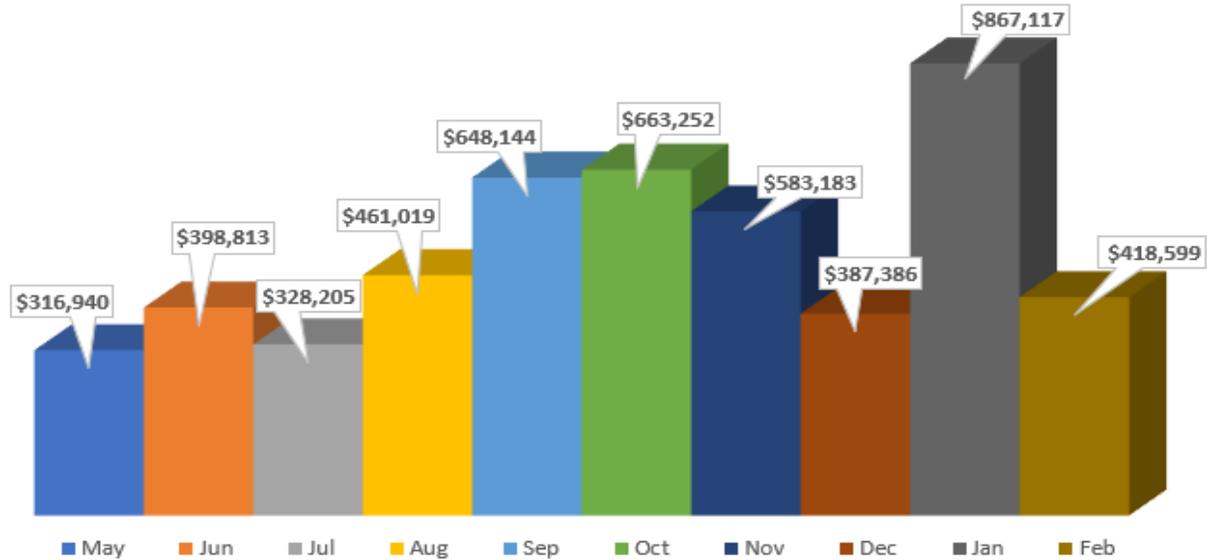
*Updated after FY2025 City audit approval in October 2025.

* "Other" budget line has been adjusted to \$481,898 (previously \$482,698) to correct a duplication. \$10,000 allocated for Employee Tuition is already included under the Benefits line and has therefore been removed from "Other." Employee Tuition has also been removed from the "Other" table on page 4. (11/18/2025)

Revenue By Month



Expense By Month



**Lake Forest Library
Financial Notes and Variance Report
For the Month of February 2026 (Month 10) FY2026**

Funds on Hand: \$5,160,948 (unrestricted/unaudited).

General Operations - Revenues

Property Tax Based: As of February 28, the Library received \$5,178,237 in property tax distributions, which is 100% of the annual budget.

Other Tax Based: As of February 28, the Library received \$75,566 which reflects personal property tax of \$47,000 and per capita grant \$28,566 which is 104% of the annual budget.

Gifts: As of February 28, the Library received \$36,609 as gifts and grants, which is 366% of the annual budget.

Library-Generated: As of February 28, the Library received \$18,583 in Library generated income. This income is from copiers, other revenue such as CCS and miscellaneous fees, which is 77% of the annual budget.

Interest on Investment: As of February 28, the Library received \$333,648 in interest on investment (through January 31,2026), which is 95% of the annual budget.

General Operations - Expenditures

Salaries, wages, and benefits: As of February 28, \$1,830,634 for salaries and wages: 79% of FY budget; \$601,368 for benefits: 71% of FY budget. \$461,741 for medical insurance 77% of FY budget; \$134,955 for SSN: 76% of FY budget; \$102,609 for IMRF: 54% of FY budget and \$9,635 for Worker's Compensation: 161% of FY budget.

Materials: Books, AV, and Electronic Services: As of February 28, \$472,013: 63% of annual budget. This includes payments for periodical and database subscriptions.

Other Operating Expenditures: As of February 28, \$454,032: 51% of annual budget. Includes \$229,894 in library contractual services, including fourth payment of RFID lease of \$24,041 to Bibliotheca and \$224,138 for other expenses such as programs, administrative fees, office supplies, membership, and miscellaneous expenses.

Building and Grounds: As of February 28, \$206,933 which is 52% of the FY budget. Reflects the building insurance, contracts and service calls for building maintenance, the cleaning service, elevator, repairs and service for Boiler, HVAC, and other systems.

Capital Improvement: As of February 28, \$1,507,676: 41% of annual budget. Reflects \$2,350 for Art Restoration, \$14,501 in technology upgrades, \$12,595 for completion of HVAC Controls Project, \$15,000 for completion of elevator upgrade, \$127,100 in architectural fees related to Courtyard Design & Construction Documents to WJE, \$1,168,985 to Berglund Construction for Courtyard construction work, and \$118,780 to Vinci-Hamp for schematic design related to 1931 Historic Rooms project. A separate payment was made to Vinci-Hamp for Courtyard furniture totaling \$48,365.

Year to Date FY2026: 57% of budget expenses; 100% budget revenues.

Account Details

Contractual Services Library

Description	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD	Budget
CCS & OCLC (Integrated Library System)	\$ 11,670	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,997	\$ 3,142	\$ 17,997	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,997		\$ 68,802	\$100,000
HR Consulting	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 166	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 166	\$ 25,000
LAN, WAV, and Support (MSP)	\$ 2,130	\$ 9,925	\$ 9,929	\$ 9,933	\$ 9,953	\$ 10,636	\$ 9,962	\$ 9,962	\$ 9,962	\$ 9,965	\$ 92,358	\$145,200
EZ Proxy & Collection HQ	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,016	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 1,016	\$ 10,000
Bibliotheca	\$ 24,041	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 24,041	\$ 25,000
Online/Internet (fiber)	\$ -	\$ 1,338	\$ 1,363	\$ 1,379	\$ 1,379	\$ 1,379	\$ 1,379	\$ 1,379	\$ 1,387	\$ 1,387	\$ 12,368	\$ 25,000
Other: Web Calendar Subscription	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15	\$ -	\$ 13,200		\$ 13,227	\$ 50,000
Technology Leased & Warranty Renewals	\$ -	\$ 1,687	\$ 73	\$ 899	\$ -	\$ 7,161	\$ 1,914	\$ 3,175	\$ 2,001	\$ 1,006	\$ 17,917	\$ 30,000
Total	\$ 37,841	\$ 12,950	\$ 11,542	\$ 31,223	\$ 14,474	\$ 37,172	\$ 13,270	\$ 14,516	\$ 44,547	\$ 12,358	\$ 229,894	\$ 410,200

Others

Description	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD	Budget
NEW STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	\$ -	\$ 11,209	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,209	\$ 100,000
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	\$ 2,382	\$ -	\$ 4,764	\$ 2,382	\$ 2,382	\$ 2,382	\$ 2,382	\$ 2,382	\$ -	\$ 4,764	\$ 23,818	\$ 30,000
PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 61	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 61	\$ -	\$ 121	\$ 1,000
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT	\$ -	\$ 1,314	\$ 3,675	\$ 2,621	\$ 2,547	\$ 1,043	\$ 2,274	\$ 2,249	\$ 3,148	\$ 2,453	\$ 21,326	\$ 30,000
MEMBERSHIP DUES	\$ 1,545	\$ (17)	\$ 825	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 325	\$ 597	\$ 1,030	\$ 874	\$ 370	\$ 6,149	\$ 11,000
MEETINGS & EXPENSE REIMB	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 332	\$ 71	\$ -	\$ 149	\$ 68	\$ 125	\$ (5)	\$ 741	\$ 2,500
LEGAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,363	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,005	\$ -	\$ 6,368	\$ 100,000
AUDITING SERVICES	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,087	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,087	\$ 9,000
PROGRAMS & SERVICES	\$ 10,006	\$ 16,733	\$ 15,556	\$ 13,816	\$ 7,552	\$ 9,098	\$ 11,244	\$ 6,342	\$ 7,207	\$ 17,189	\$ 114,744	\$ 152,400
ONLINE BANKING FEES	\$ 276	\$ -	\$ 281	\$ 555	\$ 277	\$ 295	\$ 821	\$ 6	\$ 7	\$ 1,686	\$ 4,204	\$ 2,200
INSURANCE - LIABILITY	\$ 1,650	\$ 5,148	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (114)	\$ 114		\$ 85	\$ 6,883	\$ 10,648
TELEPHONE	\$ 41	\$ 41	\$ 41	\$ 42	\$ 42	\$ 42	\$ 42	\$ 53	\$ 53	\$ 53	\$ 451	\$ 5,000
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 377	\$ 105	\$ 39	\$ 304	\$ 389	\$ 542	\$ 444	\$ 6,476	\$ 641	\$ 584	\$ 9,901	\$ 15,000
POSTAGE	\$ 995	\$ 47	\$ 290	\$ 1,130	\$ 1,027	\$ 319	\$ 1,142	\$ 15	\$ 250	\$ 1,176	\$ 6,391	\$ 7,150
VENDING BEVERAGES	\$ 127	\$ 67	\$ 376	\$ 146	\$ 768	\$ 387	\$ 304	\$ 698	\$ 798	\$ 74	\$ 3,746	\$ 6,000
Total	\$ 17,398	\$ 34,646	\$ 28,210	\$ 29,776	\$ 15,356	\$ 14,434	\$ 19,285	\$ 19,434	\$ 17,170	\$ 28,428	\$ 224,138	\$ 481,898

Contractual Service Building

Description	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD	Budget
Water Treatment	\$ 184	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 552	\$ 184	\$ 184	\$ 189	\$ 189	\$ 189	\$ 189	\$ 1,862	
Alarm System	\$ 2,451	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 248	\$ 2,699	
Inner Security System	\$ 399	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 248	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 248	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 894	
Rose Pest	\$ 107	\$ 282	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ 1,301	
AED (CINTAS)	\$ -	\$ 667	\$ 1,109	\$ 707	\$ 751	\$ 910	\$ 845	\$ 802	\$ 799	\$ 804	\$ 7,394	
Off-site Storage	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 42	\$ 284	\$ 284	\$ 284	\$ 364	\$ 364	\$ 364	\$ 1,622	
Total	\$ 3,141	\$ 949	\$ 1,223	\$ 1,662	\$ 1,333	\$ 1,492	\$ 1,680	\$ 1,469	\$ 1,466	\$ 1,719	\$ 16,135	\$ 25,000

Building & Grounds

DESCRIPTION	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD	Budget
CONTRACTUAL SERVICE	\$ 3,141	\$ 949	\$ 1,223	\$ 1,662	\$ 1,333	\$ 1,492	\$ 1,680	\$ 1,469	\$ 1,466	\$ 1,719	\$ 16,135	\$ 25,000
WATER	\$ 510	-	\$ -	\$ 661	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,031	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 791	\$ 2,993	\$ 10,000
JANITORIAL SERVICES	\$ 2,999	\$ 2,999	\$ 2,999	\$ 2,999	\$ 2,999	\$ 3,359	\$ 2,999	\$ 2,999	\$ 3,174	\$ 2,999	\$ 30,525	\$ 49,500
JANITORIAL SUPPLIES	\$ 380	\$ 1,886	\$ 1,175	\$ 979	\$ 886	\$ 1,687	\$ 1,756	\$ 540	\$ 960	\$ 780	\$ 11,029	\$ 25,000
MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT	\$ 1,830	\$ 2,038	\$ 1,444	\$ 2,637	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,395	\$ 5,652	\$ -	\$ 16,996	\$ 60,000
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	\$ 791	\$ 1,135	\$ 1,495	\$ 3,303	\$ 5,780	\$ 2,528	\$ 430	\$ 4,892	\$ 10,175	\$ 10,365	\$ 40,894	\$ 120,000
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	\$ 1,828	\$ 2,259	\$ 4,413	\$ 5,205	\$ 7,363	\$ 2,193	\$ 5,009	\$ 2,608	\$ 1,650	\$ 946	\$ 33,474	\$ 50,000
INSURANCE	\$ 51,904	\$ 2,983	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 54,887	\$ 59,895
Total	\$ 63,384	\$ 14,249	\$ 12,749	\$ 17,447	\$ 18,361	\$ 11,259	\$ 12,905	\$ 15,904	\$ 23,077	\$ 17,598	\$ 206,933	\$ 399,395

Capital Improvement

Description	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	YTD	Budget
Capital Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 600,000
Technology Upgrade	\$ -	\$ 1,300	\$ 4,219	\$ 6,905	\$ -	\$ 2,010	\$ 67	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,501	\$ 250,000
Capital Improvement	\$ -	\$ 42,615	\$ -	\$ 7,900	\$ 315,244	\$ 337,756	\$ 259,729	\$ 69,971	\$ 399,296	\$ 60,665	\$ 1,493,175	\$ 2,850,000
Total	\$ -	\$ 43,915	\$ 4,219	\$ 14,805	\$ 315,244	\$ 339,766	\$ 259,796	\$ 69,971	\$ 399,296	\$ 60,665	\$ 1,507,676	\$ 3,700,000

LAKE FOREST LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2026

Members Present: Trustee Vince Sparrow, Trustee John Johnson, Executive Director Ishwar Laxminarayan, Business Manager Leo Hamza

Others Present: Trustee Heather Strong, Trustee Garth Pearson, Assistant Director Heidi Krueger, Facilities Assistant Bledian Ajroja

The meeting commenced at 3:00 p.m. There were no public comments.

Director Laxminarayan opened the discussion by presenting spreadsheets outlining capital improvements completed over the past five years, along with projected improvements for the next five years. These summaries covered everything from routine equipment maintenance to technology upgrades and major capital projects, organized by anticipated quarterly costs. Board members expressed their appreciation for the clarity and level of detail provided, noting that the information will greatly support decision-making as the library enters a period of significant capital projects.

Business Manager Leo Hamza then presented the preliminary February 2026 (month 10) financial report. He explained minor adjustments to the categorization of tax revenue, with the first two revenue lines now labeled “Property Tax Based” and “Other Tax Based.” He also noted updates to the pie charts on page one of the report: in the Revenue YTD chart, “Tax Based” now reflects the combined totals of the two tax-based lines; “Interest on Investment” represents total interest earned; and “Other Revenue” now includes Friends of Lake Forest Library, Library-Generated revenue, and Gifts & Grants. In the Expense YTD pie chart, Salaries & Wages and Benefits have been consolidated into a single category.

Director Laxminarayan continued by presenting Version 2.0 of the proposed FY2027 budget, outlining projected FY2026 expenditures and how those projections informed the updated FY2027 figures. Finance Committee and Board members expressed confidence in Version 2.0 of the proposed budget.

Staff will continue to review Version 2.0 of the proposed FY2027 budget and incorporate trustee feedback from the March 17 Board meeting before presenting an updated version of the budget at the April Finance Committee meeting. The final version of the budget will be approved at the April 21, 2026 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The group continued its conversation with a discussion of major upcoming capital improvement projects and how best to align their timelines with budgeting needs over the next several fiscal years.

The meeting adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Summary

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY27	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Budget	As of Feb 28	Budget Realized	Projected	Budget	\$	%
Funds on Hand 5/1*	\$2,471,607	\$3,953,524	\$4,751,256	\$4,751,256	\$5,160,948	\$5,160,948	\$5,160,948	\$5,160,948		
Current Revenue										
Property Tax-Based**	\$4,580,995	\$4,822,813	\$5,039,360	\$5,225,869	\$5,225,237	100%	\$5,225,237	\$5,421,218	\$195,981	4%
Other Revenue	\$42,042	\$40,245	\$40,858	\$38,000	\$33,058	87%	\$33,566	\$33,566	\$0	0%
Interest & Library Revenue	\$343,153	\$494,147	\$478,965	\$364,000	\$347,739	96%	\$445,500	\$391,000	(\$54,500)	-12%
Transfer from Capital Reserve									\$0	
Gifts	\$30,900	\$47,520	\$18,551	\$10,000	\$36,609	366%	\$40,000	\$1,000,000	\$960,000	
Friends of LF Library Grant	\$47,471	\$286,382	\$64,905	\$60,000	\$35,251	59%	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$0	0%
Total Revenues	\$5,044,561	\$5,691,107	\$5,642,639	\$5,697,869	\$5,677,895	101%	\$5,799,303	\$6,900,784	\$1,101,481	19%
Total Funds Available	\$7,516,168	\$9,644,631	\$10,393,895	\$10,449,125	\$10,838,843		\$10,960,251	\$12,061,732	\$1,101,481	10%
Operating Expenditures										
Personnel Services	\$2,268,470	\$2,479,493	\$2,741,198	\$3,170,081	\$2,432,002	77%	\$2,990,969	\$3,217,238	\$226,268	8%
Collections: Print, A/V, E-Resources	\$497,327	\$634,349	\$662,413	\$750,000	\$472,013	63%	\$600,000	\$750,000	\$150,000	25%
Contractual Services	\$292,795	\$279,133	\$301,959	\$410,200	\$229,894	56%	\$283,176	\$386,541	\$103,365	37%
Programming	\$99,559	\$110,063	\$138,098	\$152,400	\$114,744	75%	\$137,693	\$154,200	\$16,507	12%
Other Expenditures	\$149,412	\$109,711	\$129,288	\$329,498	\$109,394	33%	\$172,178	\$430,000	\$257,822	150%
Building & Grounds	\$296,122	\$229,500	\$243,505	\$399,395	\$206,933	52%	\$252,446	\$434,500	\$182,054	72%
Total Operating Expenditures	\$3,603,686	\$3,842,250	\$4,216,462	\$5,211,574	\$3,564,980	68%	\$4,436,462	\$5,372,479	\$936,016	21%
Total Capital and Technology										
Capital Equipment	\$216,197	\$45,629	\$35,250	\$600,000	\$0	0%	\$60,000	\$250,000	\$550,000	317%
Technology Upgrades	\$136,654	\$118,696	\$67,718	\$250,000	\$14,501	6%	\$30,000	\$250,000	\$153,548	733%
Capital Improvements	\$556,107	\$886,800	\$563,517	\$2,850,000	\$1,493,175	52%	\$2,400,000	\$5,000,000	\$2,600,000	108%
Total Capital and Technology	\$908,958	\$1,051,125	\$666,486	\$3,700,000	\$1,507,676	41%	\$2,490,000	\$5,500,000	\$3,010,000	121%
Total Expenditures	\$4,512,645	\$4,893,375	\$4,882,947	\$8,911,574	\$5,072,656		\$6,926,462	\$10,872,479	\$3,946,016	57%
Difference in Revenues and Expenditures	\$531,916	\$797,733	\$759,692	(\$3,213,705)	\$605,239		(\$1,127,159)	(\$3,971,695)	(\$2,844,536)	252%
Reserve Funds	\$4,600,000	\$3,650,000	\$3,650,000	\$3,650,000	\$4,000,000		\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$0	0%
Funds on Hand	\$2,471,607	\$3,953,524	\$4,751,256	\$4,751,256	\$5,160,948		\$5,160,948	\$5,160,948	\$0	0%
Total Funds	\$7,603,523	\$8,401,256	\$9,160,948	\$5,187,551	\$9,766,187		\$8,033,789	\$5,189,253	(\$2,844,536)	-35%

*Unrestricted fund maintained at 35%; year end surplus transferred to capital improvement accounts.

**Tax Revenue based on 2025 levy of 3.85% (including new growth)

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Property Taxes

Year	Fiscal year	Levy %	Operations	Site	Growth	Total Levy
2024	FY2026	3.40%	\$4,656,066	\$495,961	\$28,842	\$5,180,869
2025	FY2027	3.85%	\$4,820,778	\$510,367	\$45,073	\$5,376,218
Difference			\$164,712	\$14,406	\$16,231	\$195,349

PROJECTED EQUALIZED ASSESSED VALUATION

Tax levy is based on Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV).
Based on information from the County Clerk's Office the projected Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) of property in The City of Lake Forest for the tax year 2024 is as follows:

2024 EAV for The City of Lake Forest	\$2,775,045,473
Estimated average change to existing property	8.097023%*
2025 EAV for existing property	\$2,999,741,539
Total Estimated New Construction Growth for 2025	\$27,562,640
\$ Total Projected EAV for 2025 Tax Levy	\$3,027,304,179

*subject to change based on property tax appeals

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Board Designated Funds

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

	FY23 Audited	FY24 Audited	FY25 Audited	FY26 Budget	FY26 As of Feb 28	FY27 Budget
Funds on Hand 5/1	\$2,471,607	\$3,953,524	\$4,751,256	\$4,751,256	\$5,160,948	\$5,160,948
Less: Capital Project	\$2,471,607	\$3,953,524	\$4,751,256	\$4,751,256	\$5,160,948	\$5,160,948
Committed Funds						
Capital Improvements	\$4,000,000	\$3,050,000	\$3,050,000	\$3,050,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Capital Equipment	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Technology Improvements	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Total Other	\$4,600,000	\$3,650,000	\$3,650,000	\$3,650,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Less: Capital Project	\$4,600,000	\$3,650,000	\$3,650,000	\$3,650,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Total Funds	\$7,071,607	\$7,603,524	\$8,401,256	\$8,401,256	\$9,160,948	\$9,160,948

*Library Board of Trustees passed resolution on April 15 2025 to designate \$3,000,000 for Capital Improvements \$500,000 for Capital Equipment \$500,000 for Technology Improvements

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Revenues

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY27	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Budget	As of Feb 28	Projected	Budget	\$	%
Property Tax Revenue									
Property Tax*	\$4,463,980	\$4,739,540	\$4,982,825	\$5,180,869	\$5,178,237	\$5,178,237	\$5,376,218	\$197,981	4%
PP Tax Replacement	\$117,016	\$83,273	\$56,535	\$45,000	\$47,000	\$47,000	\$45,000	(\$2,000)	-4%
Total Property Tax	\$4,580,995	\$4,822,813	\$5,039,360	\$5,225,869	\$5,225,237	\$5,225,237	\$5,421,218	\$195,981	4%
Other Revenue									
Impact Fee	\$13,475	\$11,679	\$12,098	\$10,000	\$4,492	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	0%
Per Capita Grant	\$28,566	\$28,566	\$28,760	\$28,000	\$28,566	\$28,566	\$28,566	\$0	0%
Total Other Revenue	\$42,042	\$40,245	\$40,858	\$38,000	\$33,058	\$33,566	\$33,566	\$0	0%
Interest & Library Revenue									
Photocopy	\$7,416	\$7,421	\$7,994	\$6,000	\$6,154	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$0	0%
Library Fines & Fees	\$3,650	\$3,497	\$6,215	\$3,000	\$5,436	\$5,500	\$4,000	(\$1,500)	-27%
Interest on Investment	\$307,548	\$475,272	\$455,630	\$350,000	\$333,648	\$430,000	\$375,000	(\$55,000)	-13%
Other Revenues	\$14,198	\$7,956	\$9,126	\$5,000	\$2,502	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	67%
Covid Fema Reimbursement	\$10,341	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Total Library Revenue	\$343,153	\$494,147	\$478,965	\$364,000	\$347,739	\$445,500	\$391,000	(\$54,500)	-12%
Friends of LFLibrary Grant**	\$47,471	\$286,382	\$64,905	\$60,000	\$35,251	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$0	0%
Other Gifts & Grant Income***	\$30,900	\$47,520	\$18,551	\$10,000	\$36,609	\$40,000	\$1,000,000	\$960,000	2,400%
TOTAL	\$5,044,561	\$5,691,107	\$5,642,639	\$5,697,869	\$5,677,895	\$5,799,303	\$6,900,784	\$1,101,481	19%

*Tax Revenue based on 2025 levy increase of 2.9%. With new construction levy increases to 3.85%.

**Friends of LF Library approved funds on a reimbursement basis for FY2026. Two rounds of funding are anticipated in FY2027.

***Most gifts are now made to the Lake Forest Library Foundation for the endowment and capital improvements.

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Expenditures

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY27	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected
Category	Audited	Audited	Audited	Budget	As of Feb 28	Projected	Budget	\$	%
Salaries/Wages	\$1,731,987	\$1,904,963	\$2,095,095	\$2,322,657	\$1,830,634	\$2,246,687	\$2,389,840	\$143,153	6%
Benefits	\$536,483	\$574,531	\$646,103	\$847,424	\$601,368	\$744,283	\$827,398	\$83,115	11%
Print, Audiovisual, and Electronic Media	\$497,327	\$634,349	\$662,413	\$750,000	\$472,013	\$600,000	\$750,000	\$150,000	25%
Contractual Services	\$292,795	\$279,133	\$301,959	\$410,200	\$229,894	\$283,176	\$386,541	\$103,365	37%
Programming	\$99,559	\$110,063	\$138,098	\$152,400	\$114,744	\$137,693	\$154,200	\$16,507	12%
Other Expenses	\$149,412	\$109,711	\$129,288	\$329,498	\$109,394	\$172,178	\$430,000	\$257,822	150%
Building Maintenance	\$296,122	\$229,500	\$243,505	\$399,395	\$206,933	\$237,342	\$434,500	\$197,158	83%
Sub-Total	\$3,619,926	\$3,842,250	\$4,216,462	\$5,211,574	\$3,564,980	\$4,421,359	\$5,372,479	\$951,120	22%
Capital Expenditures									
Capital Equipment	\$216,197	\$45,629	\$35,250	\$600,000	\$0	\$60,000	\$250,000	\$190,000	317%
Technology Upgrades	\$136,654	\$118,696	\$67,718	\$250,000	\$14,501	\$30,000	\$250,000	\$220,000	733%
Capital Improvement	\$556,107	\$886,800	\$563,517	\$2,850,000	\$1,493,175	\$2,400,000	\$5,000,000	\$2,600,000	108%
Sub-Total	\$908,958	\$1,051,125	\$666,486	\$3,700,000	\$1,507,676	\$2,490,000	\$5,500,000	\$3,010,000	121%
Total	\$4,528,885	\$4,893,375	\$4,882,947	\$8,911,574	\$5,072,656	\$6,911,359	\$10,872,479	\$3,961,120	57%

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Wages and Benefits

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY2027	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Budget	As of Feb 28	Projected	Budget	\$	%
Current Employees									
Full Time Equivalent	27	29	31.5	32	32	32	33		
Salaries & Wages	\$1,731,987	\$1,904,963	\$2,095,095	\$2,322,657	\$1,830,634	\$2,246,687	\$2,389,840	\$143,153	6%
Sub-Total	\$1,731,987	\$1,904,963	\$2,095,095	\$2,322,657	\$1,830,634	\$2,246,687	\$2,389,840	\$143,153	6%
Benefits									
IMRF	\$104,022	\$92,126	\$106,353	\$190,000	\$102,609	\$125,929	\$153,838	\$27,909	22%
Social Security	\$129,701	\$143,463	\$156,920	\$177,683	\$134,955	\$165,627	\$178,998	\$13,371	8%
Worker's Compensation*	\$1,905	\$4,245	\$4,916	\$6,000	\$9,635	\$11,825	\$11,000	(\$825)	-7%
Insurance, Life & AD&D	\$1,929	\$2,163	\$1,832	\$2,620	\$822	\$1,027	\$1,443	\$416	40%
Insurance, Medical (Includes HSA contribution)	\$285,657	\$316,642	\$358,476	\$425,000	\$338,125	\$422,657	\$439,119	\$16,463	4%
Insurance, Dental & Vision	\$11,569	\$11,948	\$13,351	\$18,921	\$13,448	\$15,000	\$16,000	\$1,000	7%
Insurance, Unemployment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	0%
Flexi-Benefits	\$1,700	\$3,945	\$4,255	\$5,200	\$1,775	\$2,219	\$5,000	\$2,781	125%
Tuition Reimbursement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	0%
Employee Assistance Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	0%
Sub-Total	\$536,483	\$574,531	\$646,103	\$847,424	\$601,368	\$744,283	\$827,398	\$83,115	11%
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,268,470	\$2,479,493	\$2,741,198	\$3,170,081	\$2,432,002	\$2,990,969	\$3,217,238	\$226,268	8%

Includes annual sick leave buyout; and retirement with IMRF sick leave and vacation leave.

*Premium plus allowance for year end audit results.

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Collections

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

Item	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY27	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Budget	As of Feb 28	Projected	Budget	\$	%
Print	\$190,972	\$245,525	\$229,619	\$270,000	\$153,930	\$218,942	\$270,000	\$51,058	23%
Nonprint	\$242,071	\$316,358	\$349,460	\$380,000	\$263,306	\$313,306	\$380,000	\$66,694	21%
Audiovisual	\$64,284	\$72,466	\$83,334	\$100,000	\$54,778	\$67,753	\$100,000	\$32,247	48%
Total	\$497,327	\$634,349	\$662,413	\$750,000	\$472,013	\$600,000	\$750,000	\$150,000	25%

ISL recommended materials budget is 8-12% of operating budget. Proposed materials budget is 14.25% of operating budget

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Building and Grounds

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

Item	FY23 Audited	FY24 Audited	FY25 Audited	FY26 Budget	FY26 As of Feb 28	FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected \$	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected %
Janitorial Supplies	\$11,973	\$18,019	\$22,726	\$25,000	\$11,029	\$13,234	\$25,000	\$11,766	89%
Janitorial Services	\$38,159	\$40,522	\$36,663	\$49,500	\$30,525	\$36,630	\$49,500	\$12,870	35%
Contractual Services	\$8,393	\$9,777	\$20,601	\$25,000	\$16,135	\$19,362	\$125,000	\$105,638	546%
Insurance - Property	\$41,339	\$40,924	\$46,649	\$59,895	\$54,887	\$54,887	\$60,000	\$5,113	9%
Building Maintenance	\$45,009	\$57,194	\$50,311	\$120,000	\$40,894	\$49,073	\$80,000	\$30,927	63%
Maintenance of Equipment	\$107,339	\$36,367	\$45,757	\$60,000	\$16,996	\$20,395	\$40,000	\$19,605	96%
Grounds Maintenance	\$37,220	\$22,186	\$16,213	\$50,000	\$33,474	\$40,169	\$50,000	\$9,831	24%
Water	\$6,691	\$4,511	\$4,586	\$10,000	\$2,993	\$3,592	\$5,000	\$1,408	39%
Total	\$296,122	\$229,500	\$243,505	\$399,395	\$206,933	\$237,342	\$434,500	\$197,158	83%

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Contractual Services, Programming, and Other Expenses

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

Item	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY27	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Budget	As of Feb 28	Projected	Budget	\$	%
Contractual Services	\$292,795	\$279,133	\$301,959	\$410,200	\$229,894	\$283,176	\$386,541	\$103,365	37%
Special Projects	\$16,240	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Programming									
Programming - Adult & Youth Services	\$73,455	\$76,127	\$106,849	\$104,200	\$82,831	\$99,397	\$104,200	\$4,803	5%
Programming - Communications	\$26,104	\$33,936	\$31,249	\$48,200	\$31,913	\$38,296	\$50,000	\$11,704	31%
Total	\$99,559	\$110,063	\$138,098	\$152,400	\$114,744	\$137,693	\$154,200	\$16,507	12%
Other Expenses									
Administrative Services	\$26,412	\$27,072	\$27,749	\$30,000	\$23,818	\$28,572	\$30,000	\$1,428	5%
Audit	\$7,400	\$7,622	\$7,851	\$9,000	\$8,087	\$8,087	\$9,000	\$913	11%
Insurance, D & O Liability	\$6,194	\$6,798	\$6,798	\$10,648	\$6,883	\$6,883	\$8,000	\$1,117	16%
Legal & Professional Fees	\$6,413	\$1,350	\$2,138	\$100,000	\$6,368	\$15,000	\$50,000	\$35,000	233%
New Strategic Initiatives	\$0	\$0	\$9,195	\$100,000	\$11,209	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	100%
Maintenance of Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Meetings Expense	\$713	\$1,182	\$1,436	\$2,500	\$741	\$889	\$2,500	\$1,611	181%
Membership Dues	\$9,630	\$7,963	\$6,064	\$11,000	\$6,149	\$7,379	\$10,000	\$2,621	36%
Office Supplies	\$6,831	\$11,061	\$13,415	\$15,000	\$9,901	\$11,881	\$15,000	\$3,119	26%
Online Banking Fee (fine)	\$1,988	\$1,779	\$2,955	\$2,200	\$4,204	\$5,045	\$5,000	-\$45	-1%
Personnel Recruitment (background checks)	\$41,063	\$11,331	\$8,417	\$1,000	\$121	\$145	\$1,000	\$855	589%
Postage	\$5,127	\$6,183	\$5,483	\$7,150	\$6,391	\$7,669	\$8,500	\$831	11%
Professional Development	\$15,927	\$21,251	\$32,358	\$30,000	\$21,326	\$25,591	\$30,000	\$4,409	17%
Telephone	\$3,322	\$3,563	\$1,970	\$5,000	\$451	\$542	\$5,000	\$4,458	823%
Vending/events	\$2,152	\$2,555	\$3,460	\$6,000	\$3,746	\$4,495	\$6,000	\$1,505	33%
Relocation & Other Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000		
Total	\$149,412	\$109,711	\$129,288	\$329,498	\$109,394	\$172,178	\$430,000	\$257,822	150%
Total Other Expend	\$558,007	\$498,907	\$569,345	\$892,098	\$454,032	\$593,047	\$970,741	\$377,694	64%

Lake Forest Library
Preliminary Budget FY2027 - Version 2.0
Contractual Services

FY2027 Budget Version 2.0
03/12/2026

Item	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	FY26	FY27	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected	FY27 Budget vs FY26 Projected
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Budget	As of Feb 28	Projected	Budget	\$	%
CCS & OCLC (Integrated Library System)	\$75,061	\$73,770	\$70,597	\$100,000	\$68,802	\$82,562	\$100,000	\$17,438	21%
CIT Computer Equipment Lease	\$9,228	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
HR Consulting	\$0	\$0	\$19,459	\$25,000	\$166	\$199	\$10,000	\$9,801	4,927%
LAN, WAV, and Support (MSP)	\$107,325	\$116,738	\$116,830	\$145,200	\$92,358	\$123,143	\$135,000	\$11,857	10%
EZ Proxy	\$4,960	\$4,327	\$4,598	\$10,000	\$1,016	\$1,016	\$2,500	\$1,484	146%
Bibliotheca	\$24,041	\$24,041	\$24,041	\$25,000	\$24,041	\$24,041	\$24,041	\$0	0%
Online/Internet (fiber)	\$22,569	\$20,395	\$16,185	\$25,000	\$12,368	\$14,842	\$25,000	\$10,158	68%
Other: Equipment, Copiers, Technology Misc.	\$24,921	\$29,310	\$25,608	\$50,000	\$13,227	\$15,872	\$40,000	\$24,128	152%
Other: Orange Boy, Vending Machine Maintenance & Web Hosting and Maintenance	\$24,692	\$10,551	\$24,642	\$30,000	\$17,917	\$21,500	\$50,000	\$28,500	133%
Total	\$292,795	\$279,133	\$301,959	\$410,200	\$229,894	\$283,176	\$386,541	\$103,365	37%

Library Operations Report February 2026

Adult Services

Patrons continue to love our Blind Date with a Book program. We wrapped 62 books with 50 checkouts and 28 entries for this month-long event. Krista, Kate, Lydia, Erin, Vanessa, and Breen, all collected titles and wrapped them with hints as to what topics awaited them inside the book.

A patron told Circulation staff that she always enjoys this program and that the book she picked up last year was one of the best books she has ever read. This program (Blind Date) helps her to read books and genres she would never have picked out on her own.

Here were some fun entries from the "Rate your Date" card that patrons fill out and enter to win a raffle prize, a gift card from Sweet's:

- *Floating Hotel* by Grace Curtis - My date was polite. The Floating Hotel and I tried to make it work, but I was considering sneaking out the back door at least 3 times. I stayed until the end of courtesy. Would not date again.
- *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman - Good murder mystery! Hard to understand the nuances of British humor for me! This is my 3rd Blind Date! Keep it up!
- *Evvie Drake Starts Over* by Linda Holmes - Evvie got some lovin' from a hot Major League baseball player! Steamy romance for the win!
- *Goodbye Paris* by Anstey Harris - Always enjoy this event. The surprise is a fun way to spice up your usual reading, even if the book isn't a favorite.
- *Into the Uncut Grass* by Trevor Noah - Doesn't feel like a Graphic Novel. Excellent Illustrations. Boring Words. Great Pictures.
- *Gilt Frame* by Margie Kraft Kinot and Matt Kinot - I don't have much experience with Graphic Novels, so this was very interesting for me. I liked it and would read another by the same authors.

Our Valentine's Day Desserts Demo and Tasting with Chef Susan Maddox brought in 55 chocolate loving patrons. We received a nice comment from a patron:

Dear Kate and Lydia,

Tonite's cooking demo led by Chef Susan Maddox was fun and deliciously chocolate! Chef Susan from a favorite local French restaurant [Le Titi de Paris] entertained the audience with her delightful humor and baking techniques. Thank you, library staff, for doing a great job connecting with our community. It was an enriching event. Lake Forest Library is a treasure to every card holder!

Jamie Novak continues to be one of our most popular presenters. Her program *How to Declutter Decades Worth of Stuff*, which was held over Zoom, was watched by 116 viewers with 132 watching the recording after the event on the Library YouTube Channel.

Kate and Heidi gave a tour of the Library to the City of Hope Cancer Institute of Chicago. They are interested in collaborating with the Library on various wellness initiatives. We will host them for a tabling event in the Foyer on Saturday, July 11th. This date will enable us to take advantage of the *Unplug Illinois Read In* that is scheduled for that date and have a coordinated health-focused event.



The Library has begun a new program with Northwestern Medicine's Lake Forest Hospital. The Library donated over 60 adults and 40 youth books, including large print, hardcover and paperbacks to the Hospital. The hospital staff and volunteers will distribute these materials to both patients and visitors. The communications team created a clever sticker: *Keep Me! Your Gift from Lake Forest Library*. This will be an ongoing program providing another venue to place withdrawn titles into the hands of readers.

Other popular programs this month included:

Perspective of Wonder: 1893 Chicago World's Fair attended by 38 patrons.

Abraham Lincoln's Doctor's Dog had 11 attendees.

In addition to our regular Grab n Go Kits we added mini masterpieces *Birdhouse Kits*. Six clever designs were submitted, with mini birdhouse themes ranging from the Chicago Bears to colorful Rainbows to Spring Gardens.

Media Lab



In February, a patron shared a striking photo of the moon that they captured using one of the Library's telescopes from the Takeout Tech collection. The image highlights both the quality of the equipment available for checkout and the meaningful ways patrons are using library resources to explore science and photography.

Roku streaming devices were added to the Library's Hot Picks collection in February. As part of this "lucky day" collection, these items cannot be placed on hold and are available on a first-come, first-served basis when patrons visit the library. This model gives more patrons the chance to discover and check out popular items during their visit while expanding access to streaming content through the Library's collection.

Youth Services

A month of love and hearts in Youth Services!



Be My Valentine, the annual reading program, began on Wednesday, January 14, and finished on Valentine's Day. We wrapped 115 books and placed them in various locations in the Children's Library. Alex Segal and Ian Monroe won a \$20 gift card to Sweets for the Be My Valentine program. Ian gave his book a thumbs down and said, "Too long, no trains." The book was poetry; his mom tried to expose her son to more literature.



The children took on the LEGO challenge to create a Valentine this month, and all our patrons got to see the fun creations for a week afterward on display at the service desk from this ever-popular LEGO Club program.



For our Sheridan School Exploration Day, the kids all had fun solving the Breakout boxes (with only a few hints from Kathy Wellington). The parent volunteers were invaluable!



Some heart-warming displays this month featured books to celebrate and honor Black History as well as former president Abraham Lincoln for his birthday!



Four-year-old William wanted to finish the Money Scavenger Hunt on his own. William found four of the five locations and only needed a small suggestion to complete the scavenger hunt and earn a piggy bank bringing the focus of Money Smart Week to our youth in the Library.



Eleanor Duloc (pictured left) completed the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. She came in with her older sister and claimed 9 book prizes, 9 stickers, a green stuffed fish, and a prize out of the special treasure chest.

Julie (pictured right) is interacting with the toddlers during a recent Terrific Two Storytime. The staff hosted 35 Storytimes at the Library and off-site.

Young Adult Services

February finished off our Blind Date with a Book display, with a total of eleven participants! Alina Schultz and Julia Pelsler won our raffle, and both enjoyed their titles, though Alina said she would not have chosen it if she had seen the cover first.

Trial By Teen was back this month, and teens take their job as taste testers very seriously. This month we had 20 different kinds of Oreos and 5 different kinds of milk! The Reese's and Mint flavors were the winners, with Mega Stuf and all Golden Oreos at the bottom of the bracket. Fairlife was their favorite brand of milk to drink, and Oberweis was the best for dipping Oreos.

Emmy was asked to moderate a Zoom panel for School Library Journal's annual Middle Grade Magic event, highlighting upcoming fantasy titles that are being released this summer! She hosted five authors from around the globe in a conversation about their books, the role of libraries, and fantasy as a window for realism.

Facilities

On February 10, NIR Roofing was onsite to address the leak in the dock area of the building. The technician was able to seal the leak and resolve the issue.

Hill Mechanical returned Monday, February 16, to resume the new boiler project. The project was completed on Thursday, February 19.

Pasquesi was onsite Thursday, February 19, to address water leakage near the hot water heater installed during 2018. The leakage was sealed and the second hot water heater (installed in 2013) began to malfunction while the technicians were on location. Upon inspection and noting its age, Pasquesi replaced that water heater and installed a new one.

On Monday, February 23, Hill Mechanical was onsite and made modifications to the HVAC duct work that supplies the Kasian Room with cold and hot air. The modifications reduced the sounds and made the space quieter to allow the forced air to remain on during programing and meetings.

The Courtyard Project resumed the week of February 23. Electrical work along with new Courtyard doors preparation was performed by Berglund Construction and Lombardi Electric. The installation of the blue stone pavers in the East Courtyard is dependent on the weather but tentatively scheduled to begin the week of March 9.

The annual State of Illinois elevator inspection was conducted by Citywide Elevator Inspection Services on February 26. The elevator passed the inspection, and a new Certificate of Inspection was issued for 2026.

Circulation

This month we saw the end of Blind Date with a Book. Patrons seem to truly enjoy the fun of this event and comment while perusing the display.

RAILS had us do another of our van counts for a week.

This year we averaged 596 checkouts per day. February is usually a big month for checkouts. Holidays are over and the dark days may lean patrons to wanting a good read. A bit down from last February's average (643), but I would count that to more patrons using our wonderful electronic options.

As usual we heard many compliments on the fireplace and how much the patrons like to sit around it. Seems most popular in January and February.

Collections

Basic processing (adding book covers) started with Ingram. Items added in February 2026 outpaced those added in 2025 by 15% as selectors are back on pace with ordering. In addition to covering hardcover books, Ingram includes paperback cover reinforcement, so we may see those items standing up a bit better to patron use, too.

We are refining workflows for withdrawing items and preparing them for delivery at Lake Forest Hospital, but the first successful delivery was made.

We have ordered some new book carts for Technical Services and other departments; they are hopefully arriving in the next few weeks.

SELECTED UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, April 24, 2026, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
The History Center of Lake Forest–Lake Bluff



Register and join Lake Forest and Lake Bluff libraries in person off-site at the History Center (509 E Deerpath Rd) as we present author Margaret Renkl in conversation with Laura Calvert, Executive Director at Elawa Farm. They will discuss Ms. Renkl's book, *The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year*.

Thursday, April 2, 2026, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm, Kasian Room
Landscaping for a Changing Climate

Register and join Lake County Forest Preserves in person to learn how what we plant and how we plant it can make a difference. Discover nature-based solutions for the home gardener that lessen the impacts of our changing climate. This event is part of Read Between the Ravines, the joint nonfiction reading program from Lake Forest Library and Lake Bluff Public Library. To learn more, visit our [Read Between page](#).

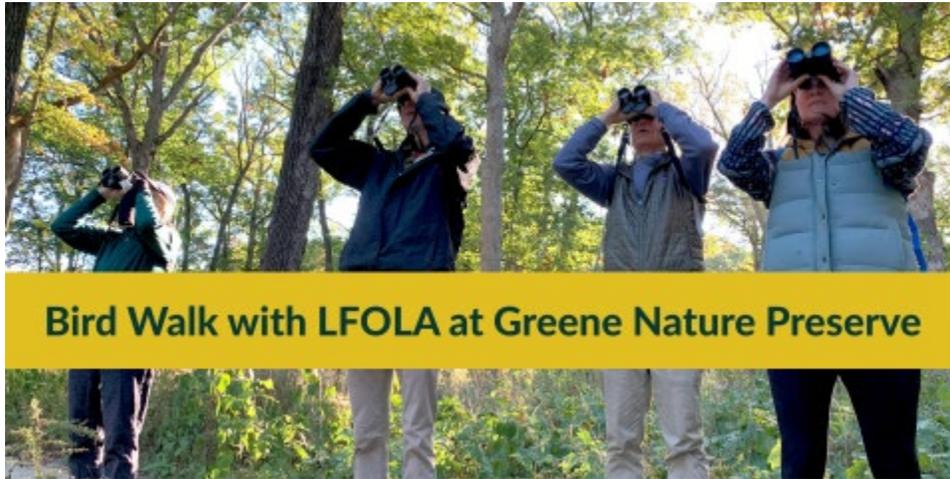
Monday, April 13, 2026, 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm, Zoom
Lost Treasures of the Titanic

Register and join art historian Mallory Mortillaro on Zoom to travel back to April 14, 1912, when tragedy struck the *RMS Titanic*. James Cameron's *Titanic* told the invented story of the Heart of the Ocean, a fictional blue diamond necklace lost tragically in the ship's famous sinking. Learn the true story of how, in addition to the incredible loss of life, a nearly incalculable amount of treasures plummeted into the ocean, never to be seen again.

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm, Media Lab
Learn & Try Generative AI

If you are curious about AI, drop in for a fun, hands-on intro to tools including ChatGPT and Google Gemini. Learn the basics, try different tools at rotating stations, and leave with useful guides to help you continue exploring at home.

Monday, April 20, 2026, 8:00 am – 9.30 am, Greene Nature Preserve
Bird Walk with LFOLA at Greene Nature Preserve



Bird Walk with LFOLA at Greene Nature Preserve

Register, wear appropriate clothing and footwear, and join Lake Forest Open Lands and Lake Forest Library off-site at [Greene Nature Preserve](#) (797-793 Sheridan Rd) for a bird hike led by a guide from the Lake County Audubon Society. *Read Between the Ravines* program.

TOP TEN CIRCULATING ITEMS
February 2026

e-Books

Position	Title	Author	Circs
1	<i>Theo of Golden</i>	Levi, Allen	25
2	<i>The Correspondent</i>	Evans, Virginia	22
3	<i>My Friends: A Novel</i>	Backman, Fredrik	19
4	<i>Strangers: A Memoir of Marriage*</i>	Burden, Belle	17
5	<i>Heart the Lover</i>	King, Lily	16
6	<i>The Wedding People</i>	Espach, Alison	15
7	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>	Brontë, Emily	15
8	<i>The Secret of Secrets</i>	Brown, Dan	14
9	<i>Buckeye</i>	Ryan, Patrick	12
10	<i>My Husband's Wife</i>	Feeney, Alice	12

*Denotes nonfiction title

e-Audiobooks

Position	Title	Author	Circs
1	<i>The Correspondent</i>	Evans, Virginia	40
2	<i>It's Not Her</i>	Kubica, Mary	22
3	<i>Dear Debbie</i>	McFadden, Freida	21
4	<i>Gone Before Goodbye</i>	Coben, Harlan & Witherspoon, Reese	19
5	<i>My Friends: A Novel</i>	Backman, Fredrik	18
6	<i>Theo of Golden</i>	Levi, Allen	18
7	<i>The First Time I Saw Him</i>	Dave, Laura	16
8	<i>Atmosphere</i>	Reid, Taylor Jenkins	15
9	<i>Great Big Beautiful Life</i>	Henry, Emily	15
10	<i>Anatomy of an Alibi</i>	Elston, Ashley	13
11	<i>The Housemaid's Secret</i>	McFadden, Freida	13

TOP TEN CIRCULATING ITEMS
February 2026

Adult Books

Position	Title	Author	Circs
1	<i>The Correspondent</i>	Evans, Virginia	61
2	<i>Theo of Golden</i>	Levi, Allen	26
3	<i>The Comfort of Crows**</i>	Renkl, Margaret	23
4	<i>The Widow</i>	Grisham, John	17
5	<i>The River We Remember</i>	Krueger, William Kent	12
6	<i>It's Not Her</i>	Kubica, Mary	12
7	<i>Nash Falls</i>	Baldacci, David	11
8	<i>Buckeye</i>	Ryan, Patrick	11
9	<i>1929 : Inside the Greatest Crash in Wall Street History--And How it Shattered a Nation*</i>	Sorkin, Andrew Ross	11
10	<i>Wild Dark Shore</i>	McConaghy, Charlotte	10

*Denotes Nonfiction
**Denotes RBR Title

Children's Books

Position	Title	Author	Circs
1	<i>The Getaway</i>	Kinney, Jeff	11
2	<i>Big Jim Believes</i>	Pilkey, Dav	9
3	<i>Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea</i>	Pilkey, Dav	9
4	<i>5-Minute Stories (Pokémon)</i>	Webster, Christy	9
5	<i>Diper Överlöde</i>	Kinney, Jeff	8
6	<i>Double Down</i>	Kinney, Jeff	8
7	<i>Greg Heffley's Journal</i>	Kinney, Jeff	8
8	<i>Partypooper</i>	Kinney, Jeff	8
9	<i>My New Friend is So Fun!</i>	Willems, Mo	8
10	<i>The Berenstain Bears' Extra Special Valentine</i>	Berenstain, Mike	7

TOP TEN CIRCULATING ITEMS
February 2026

Teen Books			
Position	Title	Author	Circs
1	<i>Demon Slayer = Kimetsu No Yaiba</i>	Gotōge, Koyoharu	15
2	<i>Yona of the Dawn</i>	Kusanagi, Mizuho	12
3	<i>Spy x Family</i>	Endō, Tatsuya	11
4	<i>Witch Hat Atelier</i>	Shirahama, Kamome	8
5	<i>Solo Leveling</i>	Chugong	7
6	<i>Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint</i>	Sleepy-C	7
7	<i>Flying Witch</i>	Ishizuka, Chihiro	5
8	<i>Blue Flag</i>	Kaito	5
9	<i>Why Raeliana Ended Up at the Duke's Mansion</i>	Milcha	5
10	<i>Tokyo Ghoul: Re</i>	Ishida, Sui	4

NonBook Items		
Position	Title	Circs
1	Mobile Hotspot	45
2	<i>One Battle After Another*</i>	18
3	<i>Wicked. For Good*</i>	17
4	Roku – MAX/HBO.	15
5	Children's Book Bag	13
6	<i>Tron. Ares*</i>	12
7	Roku – Hulu.	12
8	<i>Roofman*</i>	11
9	<i>The Roses*</i>	9
10	<i>Eleanor the Great*</i>	8

*DVD

SERVICE STATISTICS – FEBRUARY 2026

	February 2026	February 2025	YTD FY 2026	YTD FY 2025
Library Visits	13,129	12,216	143,813	140,405
Physical Items circulated	17,842	19,162	205,511	206,831
E-Media Circulated	8,854	8,556	94,613	86,754
Database Uses/Pg Views	23,228	141,478**	176,876	272,171**
Library Programs & Attendees*	54 Programs 3,568 Attendees	66 Programs 3,983 Attendees	613 Programs 41,885 Attendees	606 Programs 41,838 Attendees
Media Lab, 1-on-1 appts, Questions, and Tutorials	138	105	1,543	1,051
Reference Questions	2,009	1,706	23,480	21,527
New Library Cards	113	78	1,193	1,183
Items added to collection	1,134	982	7,716	9,381
Items withdrawn	923	1,157	8,987	14,214

*Includes passive programs and take-home activities

**In February 2025, our AtoZ Databases had over 123,000 page views. Monthly use varies but is in the high hundreds or low thousands typically. This was legitimate use according to the vendor, but an outlier that skewed stats.