



2024 Annual Report

Hamilton County
cincinnati
public
library





Our Library: Where Our Community Connects

Our Library: 41 Vibrant Community Hubs

In 2024, the Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library unveiled the re-envisioned Downtown Main Library, an exciting space for Minds of All Kinds. The electrifying reopening weekend reinforced what we do every day: welcome people to meet, read, work, learn, create, and connect at our 41 locations.

The Forest Park, Hyde Park, and Mt. Healthy branches also opened fresh public spaces as part of our Building the Next Generation Library initiative. We know these improvements are important to our community: overall, CHPL in-person visits are up 15% over 2023. And it is, of course, CHPL's dedicated staff, who ensure community members find books and materials, build their workforce, education, and technology skills, and can access support for their small businesses and entrepreneurial endeavors. Our staff members work every day to provide life-long learning opportunities to everyone for learning and enjoyment.

While the Library continues to evolve with the needs of our community, one thing will never change: our commitment to helping young Ohioans build early literacy skills. We host thousands of storytimes each year and deliver collections of books to dozens of schools and daycares, all designed to help kids discover a love for reading.

I want to thank our community members, staff, Trustees, partners, volunteers, and donors who support the Library's pursuit of gathering spaces for all to connect, relax, learn, and thrive. We greatly appreciate your support and hope you'll read further to discover all the ways we served and supported our community in 2024!



Paula Brehm-Heeger

Paula Brehm-Heeger
Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Library Director



A Place for Minds of All Kinds

Throughout this report, read about the ways we connect with the community through our Strategic Priorities. [CHPL.org/strategic-framework](https://chpl.org/strategic-framework)

From the Board President

It has been an honor to lead the Library's Board of Trustees in 2024! Nineteen of our 41 library branches (four of those in 2024) have now received improvements thanks to CHPL's Building the Next Generation Library initiative. We have a lot to celebrate thanks to taxpayers in Hamilton County. Local funding, such as the 10-year 1.5 mil levy passed by voters in 2023, is critical to continue providing excellent library spaces, services, and resources to all ages.

We carefully manage costs, operating dollars, and finances to ensure the high-quality experience community members expect. This stewardship includes monitoring spending on print and digital materials to address increased costs and reduce wait times and prioritizing staff training and market-aligned compensation to foster a workplace that best serves the community. In 2024, the Library was recognized for excellence in financial reporting by the Ohio Auditor of State's Award of Distinction and the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement.

Together, we play an important role in Hamilton County: ensuring that the Library continues to be a welcoming, essential resource now and for future generations. Thanks for joining me in your enthusiasm for this incredible resource.



Gregory W. Olson

Gregory W. Olson, President
Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library
Board of Trustees



Ways You Connected with Us



19,113,162
Items borrowed



4,960,910
Books and items in CHPL's collection



4,155,258
Customer visits
(in person, drive-thru, curbside, and holds lockers)



6,372,663
Digital items borrowed
(eBook, eAudiobook, streaming music, and other digital items)



395,096
Library cardholders



3,504,457
eBooks and eAudiobooks in CHPL's collection



397,001
Attendees at CHPL events

1,408,541
WiFi sessions at branch libraries

2,930,606
Research database sessions

69,147
Meeting and study room reservations

1,771,950
On-hold items filled

202,976
Documents faxed and scanned for free

23,409
Equipment uses at Library MakerSpaces



Connecting to Useful Resources

Responding to a Greater Need for Government Resources

CHPL connects more than 1,000 people each month to **vital government resources** like free JFS faxing, public computers with WiFi, employment support, social security benefits, passport renewals, and much more. Because need is increasing in these areas, visits to library branches by Hamilton County's 513 Relief Bus are also a welcome sight.

"I am astounded that my family and I can so easily connect with so many services without waiting for a long time," said a grateful mom at the Green Township Branch, who received assistance through the resources on the 513 Relief Bus. "I've been so stressed and now I'm relieved."

"A customer from our job help events told me that they started a new position. With this position, they said they will be able to get back on their feet and provide for their family!"

- Price Hill Branch staff member Anya Olsen-Brunot



"During our Freestore Foodbank Produce Pop Up, a mother came to us almost in tears. She had recently lost her husband, had three teenagers to feed, and was having trouble getting her SNAP food benefits application approved. She said that she was so grateful that the Library and our resources existed."

- Covedale Branch staff member MaryBeth Westermeyer

Read more: CHPL.org/government-resources



150+ Job seekers at CHPL career fairs (partners included Cincinnati Works, OhioMeansJobs, Preservation of Affordable Housing, and Supply Chain OKI)



4,230 Discovery Pass visits to local attractions



715 Community members registered to vote



97,242 Free meals and snacks for youth (funded by the USDA's Child Nutrition Program with snack support by The Library Foundation)



16 CHPL branch libraries served as polling locations



500+ People helped at 513 Relief Bus visits to CHPL branch libraries



1,499 People received passport renewal service at 5 CHPL locations



\$1,078,785 Refunds claimed as a result of free tax prep



667 Attendees at CHPL grants resource classes



15,293 Homework help sessions



Encouraging Limitless Learning

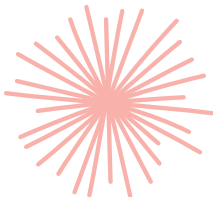
Building Early Literacy Year-Round

Weekly library storytimes at CHPL's 41 locations are filled with giggling kids, great books, and energetic, knowledgeable Youth Librarians. Below the surface, they're an important way to practice counting, make new friends, and develop early literacy skills.

By including concepts from **Science of Reading**, CHPL storytimes also provide exposure to **social skills and literacy tools and concepts**. And, because the Science of Reading is part of Ohio's school curriculum, kids get a jumpstart for success in the classroom.



Find a
Library Storytime:
Library Babies Toddler Storytime
Movers and Shakers
Preschool Storytime
KinderBridge
[CHPL.org/storytime](https://chpl.org/storytime)



"It is so wonderful to see my little granddaughter, Delilah, get the chance to enjoy the fun stories and songs. It's also so enriching for her to meet and make friends with other babies and kiddos who are part of our local Down syndrome family."

- Harry Donnermeyer, regarding CHPL's storytimes in partnership with the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Cincinnati



"I loved that she brought a guitar and did such fun songs. Can't wait to see her again. Thanks for being such fabulous libraries!"

- Parent after a Walnut Hills Branch storytime



 **179,057**
Children and caregivers at Library storytimes

 **5,791**
Library storytimes

 **1,059**
Educators served through Teacher Collections

 **24,513**
STEM event attendees

 **4,874**
Adult Education and Workforce Development class attendees

 **5,394**
Senior event attendees

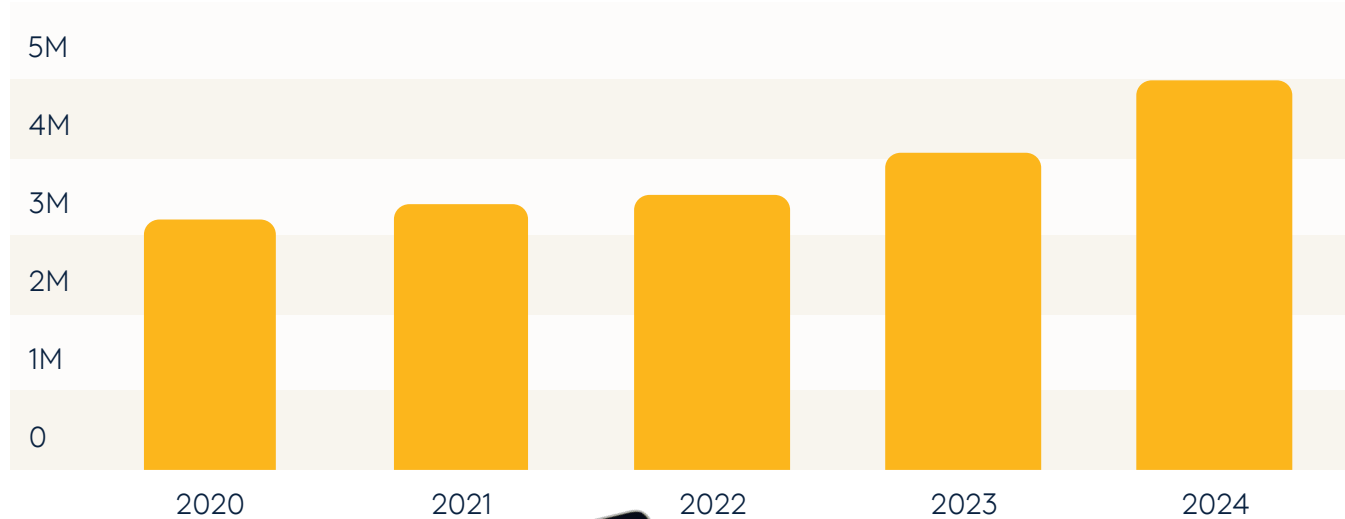


Providing Reliable Information

Improving Digital Materials Availability

The Library is committed to offering digital materials, which are available to check out anytime, anywhere. To meet the needs of the **165,000+ CHPL customers who borrowed more than 6.4 million eBooks and eAudiobooks** in 2024, the Library manages purchasing strategies to **lower customer wait times** and manage digital cost per circulation.

Increased Digital Checkouts*



5,000,000
Digital checkouts on Libby

A new CHPL record!

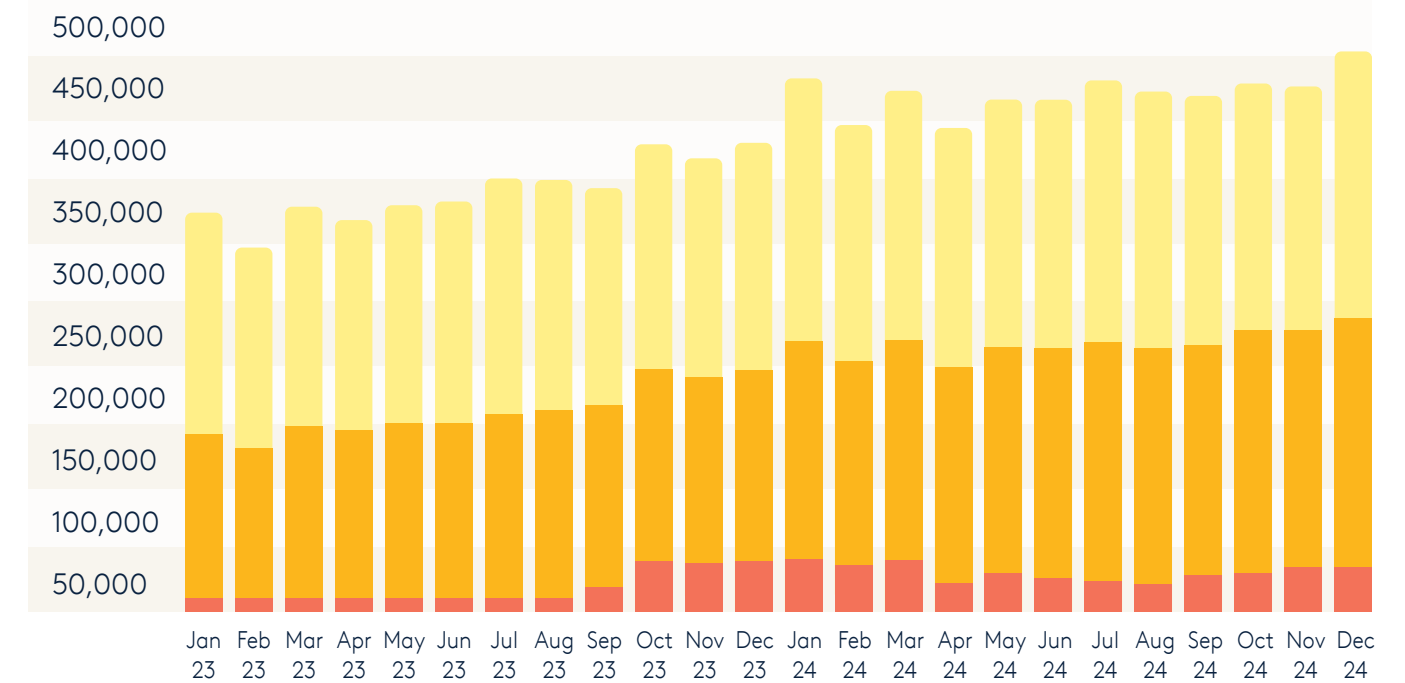
*All charts on this page reflect Libby/OverDrive usage only.

As one of the busiest public libraries in the country, CHPL provides the latest high-quality materials for research and enjoyment. In 2024, **cardholders chose from 3.5 million+ digital materials** like eBooks, audiobooks, music and movies, more than 150 research databases, virtual events to attend from their living room, and more – all free with a library card.

Top Digital Materials by Format

eBooks eAudiobooks eMagazines

Checkouts



eAudiobooks have started to equal eBooks in popularity.



77,000
CHPL.org pageviews per day

5,741
Catalog searches per day



Fostering a Healthy Culture

Making Connections at Library Branches

Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library is committed to serving minds of all kinds during their **4 million visits to CHPL locations each year**. Hamilton County residents tell us that the Library is their community living room, a welcoming a place to connect with others, access resources, and have fun.

Visits to CHPL spaces opened in 2024 have grown 16.7% (compared with the prior year), no surprise given that Ohio is one of the top 3 states in the U.S. for public library visits.*



"Someone came in who said she hadn't been in a library in over 30 years! She seemed a little unsure of everything at first and wasn't clear on how eBooks worked. After showing her one of our apps, Libby, she let me know that she thought our branch was so welcoming and the information I provided was extremely helpful."

– Michael Burgess, staff member at the Monfort Heights Branch



*Public Libraries Survey, FY 2022

"Everyone at Covedale is lovely, helpful, and so kind to me. I feel such warmth when I see your smiling faces when I come to get my books."

– Customer at the Covedale Branch



Help is always open, just a chat window away. **CHPL's Ask a Librarian service** can help you find materials, access resources, or answer any of your questions.

113,844
Ask a Librarian questions answered



Creating Welcoming Spaces

Meet Me at Main

More than 12,000 people of all ages celebrated the **reopening of the Downtown Main Library**, a re-envisioned space for Hamilton County to connect with others, access resources, and have fun.

The redesigned meeting rooms, interactive areas for kids and teens, Catherine C. and Thomas E. Huenefeld Story Center, transformed North and South plazas, and the Social Stairs are part of the \$43.4 million project to serve changing community needs.

“I’ve been crying because I’m so overwhelmed. I love the Library!”

- Debbie, who is excited to resume her weekend Main Library visits



“Nothing exemplifies community like the Library,”

- Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval, who proclaimed July 12 ‘Main Library Reopening Day’

Read more:
[CHPL.org/next](https://www.chpl.org/next)



In year six of CHPL’s Facility Master Plan implementation, we also invested in these inclusive and accessible spaces so the Library can truly be welcoming to all:



Hyde Park Branch Library saw increased accessibility through a refreshed interior: a larger elevator, redesigned entrances, a level parking lot, and fully accessible restrooms. The modern branch has more natural light, a meeting room, and even a puppet theater.

Forest Park Branch Library moved to a 26,440 square foot facility built from the ground up. The branch now includes a MakerSpace, meeting spaces and study rooms, an interactive play area for kids, an outdoor courtyard, a drive-thru, and ample parking.



Mt. Healthy Branch Library moved to a former CVS pharmacy with 10,000 square feet of accessible space. The new branch has a flexible meeting room, study pods, exciting areas for kids and teens, computers and a laptop kiosk, a drive-thru, and a parking lot.

Facility Master Plan by the Numbers

16.7%
Increase in meeting and study space reservations
(compared with prior year)

5
Drive-thrus added since 2019

20
Completed Facility Master Plan projects

484
New technology items added in 2024
(PCs, self-checks, and more)

10
New MakerSpace equipment added

61
New meeting and study spaces

59,584
Square footage added since 2019

10
Kids’ play features added

CHPL’s **Facility Master Plan** outlines improvements to our 41 library locations with input from more than 3,000 community members.



Creating Welcoming Spaces

Next Generation Libraries

Under Construction



Cheviot
Accessibility Improvements
Spring 2025



Symmes Township
Renovation and
Potential Expansion
Early 2026

In Design/Planning



Avondale
Maintenance and
Interior Updates



Delhi Township
Renovation or
Replacement



Miami Township
Relocation with
New Building



Mt. Washington
Maintenance and
Interior Updates



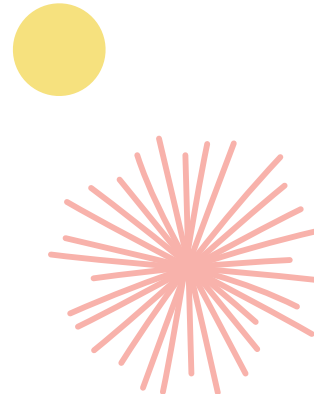
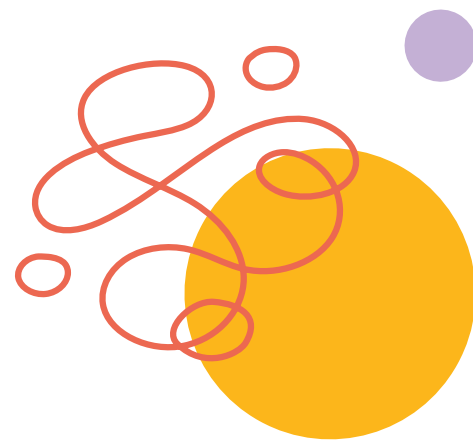
Main Library
Maintenance – Chillers and
Cooling Towers Replacement



Oakley
Maintenance and
Interior Updates



Mariemont
Maintenance and
Interior Updates



Completed County-Wide Improvements

2024	 Main Library South Building and Plaza Renovation	 Forest Park Relocation and New Build	 Hyde Park Improved Accessibility	 Mt. Healthy Relocation with New Building	
2023	 Corryville Maintenance	 Madisonville New Branch	 Pleasant Ridge Maintenance	 Sharonville Interior Update	 West End Renovation
2022	 Green Township Interior Update	 Mariemont Exterior Update	 Walnut Hills Renovation and Expansion		
2021	 Anderson Township Renovation	 Deer Park Relocation and Expansion	 Price Hill Renovation and Expansion		
2020	 College Hill Interior Update	 Elmwood Place March	 Grosbeck Interior Update	 Madeira Interior Update	
2019	 Main Library Energy Retrofit December				



Recognition



Excellence in Financial Reporting

The Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement was awarded to the Library for carefully tracking the Library's use of taxpayer funds and providing transparency to taxpayers.



American Society for Public Administration Greater Cincinnati Chapter Outstanding Public Service Honor for Building Architecture-Large Scale and Honor for Interior Architecture- Large Scale



Society of Ohio Archivists Merit Award



Workforce Council of Southwest Ohio Workforce Champion Award



Hamilton County Commission's 513 Relief Bus Commitment Award



Financials

General Fund

2024 REVENUE

Public Library Fund, State of Ohio	48,559,359
Tax Levy	40,594,468
Customer Fees	293,232
Earnings on Investments	3,001,824
Contributions	165,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,483,727
Total	\$94,097,610

2024 DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries	34,763,124
Benefits	10,719,364
Supplies	1,835,337
Purchased Services	11,442,196
Library Materials and Information	11,949,298
Capital Improvements	1,358,767
Other Objects	889,359
Transfers Out	22,000,000
Total	\$94,957,445



All Funds

2024 REVENUE

Public Library Fund, State of Ohio	48,559,359
Tax Levy	40,594,468
Customer Fees	293,232
Earnings on Investments	3,497,852
Contributions	3,496,369
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,796,283
Total	\$98,237,563

2024 DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries	34,763,124
Benefits	10,761,335
Supplies	5,169,112
Purchased Services	14,870,651
Library Materials and Information	12,015,190
Capital Improvements	23,911,123
Other Objects	889,359
Total	\$102,379,894



The Power of Summer Reading



29,044
Summer Reading participants



16,637
Meals and snacks distributed in June and July
(includes 9,022 funded through the USDA's Child Nutrition Program and 7,615 funded by The Library Foundation)



60,240
Attendees at 2,036 CHPL summer programs



444
Visits to camps and daycares in summer



35,802
New books distributed to kids and teens



Our Sponsors: Friends of the Public Library, H.B., E.W. & F.R. Luther Charitable Foundation, The Library Foundation, Ed and Joann Hubert Foundation, Edelweiss Foundation, Scripps Howard Fund, Turner Construction Foundation, Wohlgemuth Herschede Foundation

In-Kind Support: Cincinnati Reds, FC Cincinnati, Frisch's, IHOP



Foundation, Friends, and ATLA

The Library relies on both public and private support to serve our community. Private support comes to CHPL through the following dedicated organizations.



The Library Foundation

Enabled more than 15,000 in-person homework help and enrichment sessions at select library locations with funding from the Charles H. Dater Foundation and The Library Foundation.

Funded the 2024 Mary S. Stern Lecture with David Grann.



The Friends of the Public Library

Supported Library programs through sales of donated books, DVDs, music, and other materials at the Friends Warehouse shop in Hartwell.



Anderson Township Library Association

Hosted two successful annual book sales. Funds raised by the sales support adult and children's programs for the Anderson and Mt. Washington Branches.



Paula Brehm-Heeger, Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director

Board of Trustees

Christopher A. Harding, President

Colleen M. Reynolds, Vice President

Diane Cunningham Redden, Secretary

Nadine L. Allen

Robert G. Hendon

Karen R. Louis

Gregory W. Olson

Check out our 2024 year in review video and
Facility Master Plan highlights video!



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