



# 2020 Annual Report

**tacoma** public library



# Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic made 2020 a year of starts and stops. Despite all of its destruction, and thanks to many behind-the-scenes efforts, we can still say it's been a successful year at Tacoma Public Library. This Annual Report showcases our accomplishments in 2020.

As COVID-19 hit early in the year and as library buildings were hastily closed, TPL worked quickly to offer new services. We continued to develop the organization, seizing the opportunity to make long-needed adjustments to some of our internal processes.

TPL is blessed with a strong staff who are capable of doing anything we put our collective minds to (or, as is the case this year, capable of responding to anything that comes at us). Guided by our newly adopted Strategic Plan, Tacoma Public Library rose to the challenges of an unpredictable year, staying focused on meeting the needs of our community.

Thank you, as always, for your support in building a great library for Tacoma.



Kate Larsen, Library Director



## Mission, Vision, and Values

### Mission (Our purpose and why we exist)

We empower our community by bringing people together to discover, connect, create, learn, and thrive.

### Vision (Aspirations we have for our library)

We are radically welcoming: a trusted community hub where all people can find joy, compassion, and inspiration.

### Values (What we believe in)

#### **We work to break down barriers of access.**

Our commitment to racial equity and social justice guides our work, allowing us to learn about and respond to Tacoma's diverse communities' needs and opportunities.

#### **We believe that learning is a human right.**

We work to provide free access to information and ideas from diverse points of view and encourage our community to explore new ideas, perspectives, and experiences.

#### **We foster a culture of teamwork.**

We engage with our community, our partners, and one another to cultivate collaboration and innovation.

#### **We are committed stewards of our human, environmental, and financial resources.**

We practice equitable decision-making and resource allocation, and take an active, visible role in supporting sustainable and resilient communities.

# Equity and Access



*We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma's diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.*

Because of the pandemic, we broadened access by delivering our programs and services virtually, or with limited contact.

In 2020, TPL worked to connect those without access to technology by circulating Mobile Hotspots, reaching those most in need through partnerships with community organizations.



Virtual Programs

**438**

Program Attendees

**4,072**

eCards Issued

**5,100+**

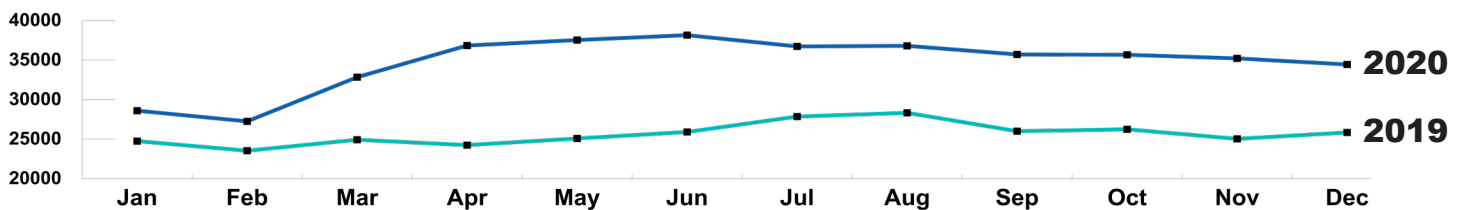
Checkouts Using  
TPL To Go

**152,206**

## Equity and Access, cont.

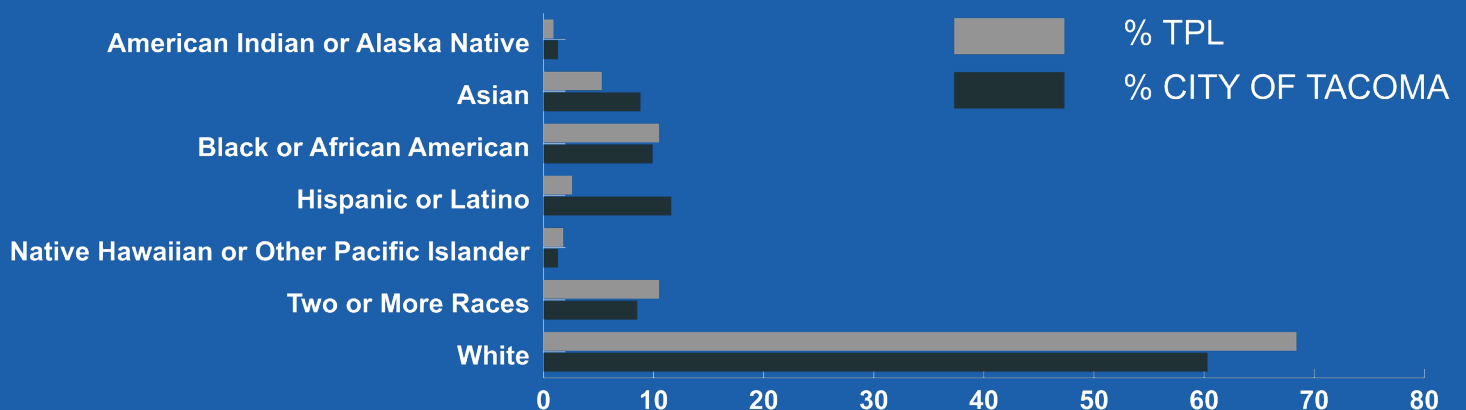
Total digital  
checkouts in 2020:  
**415,663**

In 2020, access to our eResources was paramount for patrons isolated by quarantine and social distancing.



Diversity of Hires:  
TPL workforce  
compared to City of  
Tacoma population

TPL has continued to produce more equitable hiring outcomes. In 2019, we removed barriers in our civil service testing process, which resulted in greater numbers of diverse candidates for interview consideration. In 2020, 66% of people hired were Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), an increase of BIPOC representation of our staff from 28% to 30%. This gets us closer to meeting our goal of a workforce that represents the communities we serve, but still leaves much work to be done.

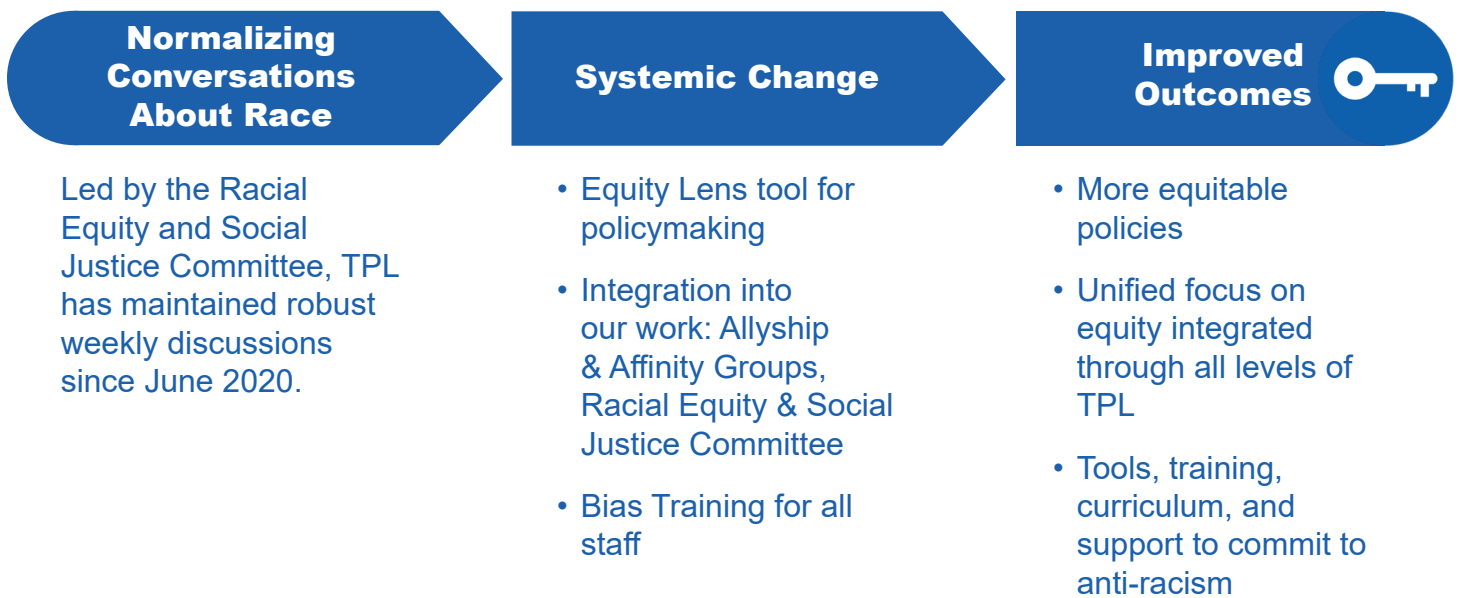




## Equity and Access, cont.

### Internal Reform: Restructuring the Workplace to Advance Equity and Inclusion

TPL is transforming its internal culture and practices to prioritize and sustain racial equity in our own work, as well as through our networks and partnerships. Among other best practices, TPL follows the Government Alliance on Race and Equity's (GARE) Framework, which dictates that the first step in institutional reform is to **normalize conversations about race, racism, and racial justice** within an organization.



Local and regional government has the ability to implement policy change at multiple levels and across multiple sectors to drive larger systemic change.

**Allyship** TPL staff created a Cross-cultural Discussion Group and a White-identifying Ally discussion group.

**Bias Training** All staff received bias training. Unconscious bias training can equip people with skills for reducing the role of bias in their everyday decisions and interactions.

**Racial Equity and Social Justice** This staff team's purpose is to nurture and sustain a culture of anti-racism and equity.

**Equity Framework for Policy & Decision Making** staff review policies affecting both internal and external audiences with an equity lens.



# Learning, Creativity, and Innovation



*We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.*

Learning, Creativity, and Innovation were essential anchors when re-imagining TPL service models in the new reality of 2020.



## **Tacoma Public Schools closed.**

### **We offered:**

- eResources for at-home learning
- Virtual Storytimes and educational programs
- Virtual Summer Reading Club activities
- Free school supply pickup for at-home learning
- Support for caretakers through online meetups and resource fairs

## **The pandemic caused layoffs throughout the city.**

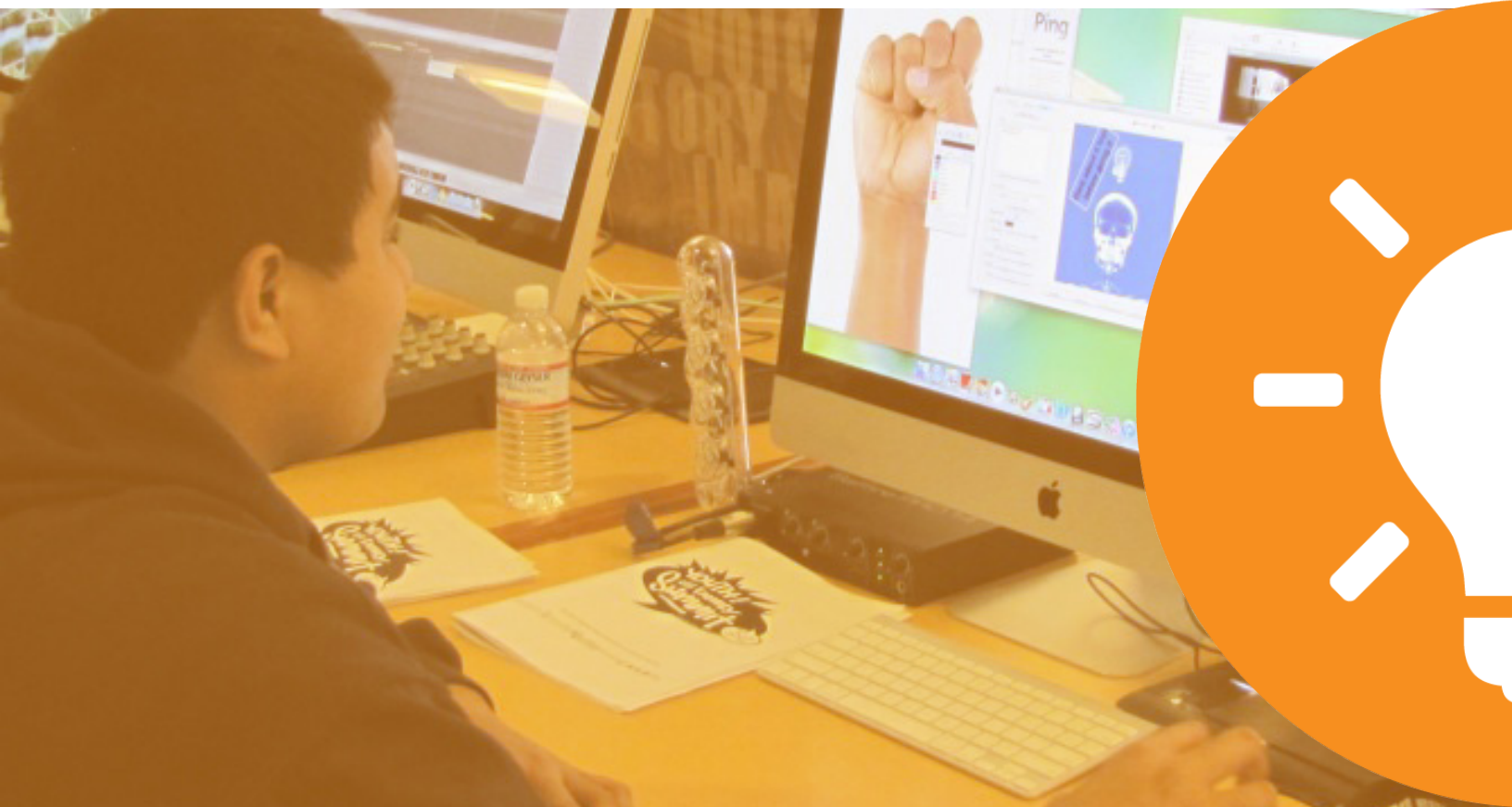
### **We offered:**

- Virtual unemployment filing assistance
- Workshops for resume and interview preparation
- Free Microsoft certification testing



## Learning, Creativity, and Innovation, cont.

TPL eResource usage skyrocketed, especially for applications that support at-home learning and entertainment.



**Usage of Scholastic Teachables increased more than 837%** after

Tacoma Public Schools closed in March of 2020.

**HelpNow saw a boost of more than 261%** as the

need for homework help and live online tutoring surged at the start of the 2020/2021 school year.

**LinkedIn Learning and Creativebug**

**usage soared** as patrons relied more heavily on virtual content for job readiness and creativity.

# Investment in Youth



*We believe that youth are the future and we will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.*



2020 started off as any other year for youth programs; in this photo we see the last in-person event of 2020, representing a growth in participation of one of our most popular, signature events, the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival.

As the pandemic took hold, TPL we quickly shifted focus, transitioning all youth programs to the virtual realm. Our staff worked adeptly to learn best practices for delivering beloved youth-focused programs via Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube.



## Investment in Youth, cont.

2020's Summer Reading Club ran from June through August. Storytimes, workshops, and other programs were all transitioned to virtual platforms. TPL distributed printed booklets and activities at our libraries, as well as through community partners.

### At a Glance:

Reading Logs

**6,500+**

Creative Kits

**13,000**

Online Events

**42**

Attendees

**695+**



# Cultivate and Engage Community



*We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.*

“Dear Tacoma” was a partnership project with Grit City Magazine, designed to collect local stories about living during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Photographs, audio recordings, emails, and handwritten letters became part of our permanent Northwest Room archives, available for future generations to see and learn from.



Engaging the community requires consistent and clear public communication; our efforts continue to expand TPL's reach across the most popular social media platforms.



**16.7%** growth in followers  
**48.7%** growth in total engagement



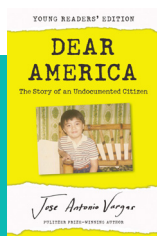
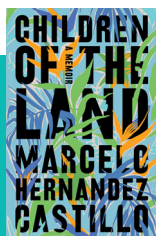
**85%** growth in followers  
**128.5%** growth in total engagement



**7.4%** growth in followers  
**29.8%** growth in total engagement



## Cultivate and Engage Community, cont.



Author Marcello Hernandez Castillo

Tacoma Reads is a city-wide reading program that seeks to unite the community in dialogue around contemporary themes through reading a common text. 2020's selections explored the immigrant experience in the U.S.

For 2020, three titles were selected, including one for children and one for middle schoolers, allowing readers of all ages and reading levels to participate. The program culminated in a virtual discussion between Marcello Hernandez Castillo, author of *Children of the Land*, and Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards. The event also included performances from Tacoma Refugee Choir.

Utilizing our network of community partners was essential to ensuring broad access to our services, programs, and collections. New partnerships sprung up from working collaboratively, creatively, and keeping our community's needs at the forefront.



# Responsible and Resilient



*We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.*

TPL made important changes and upgrades to our infrastructure and technology — supporting staff needs, making the most of our building closures, and ensuring a successful return to services.



upgraded **phone, wiring, and WiFi** systems for an improved network

**replaced aging infrastructure**

updated our **website**, [tacomalibrary.org](https://tacomalibrary.org), and **mobile app**

examined and altered workflows to accommodate maximum **social distancing**

provided **laptops and necessary equipment** to support remote work



## Responsible and Resilient, cont.

Despite our many successes, 2020 was still a challenging year for Tacoma Public Library.

### In March of 2020:

- 65% of staff were furloughed, and branches were shuttered
- Custodial and security contracts were paused or canceled
- Feasibility Study for Library Services for Eastside and Hilltop was canceled, as was the second Microlibrary

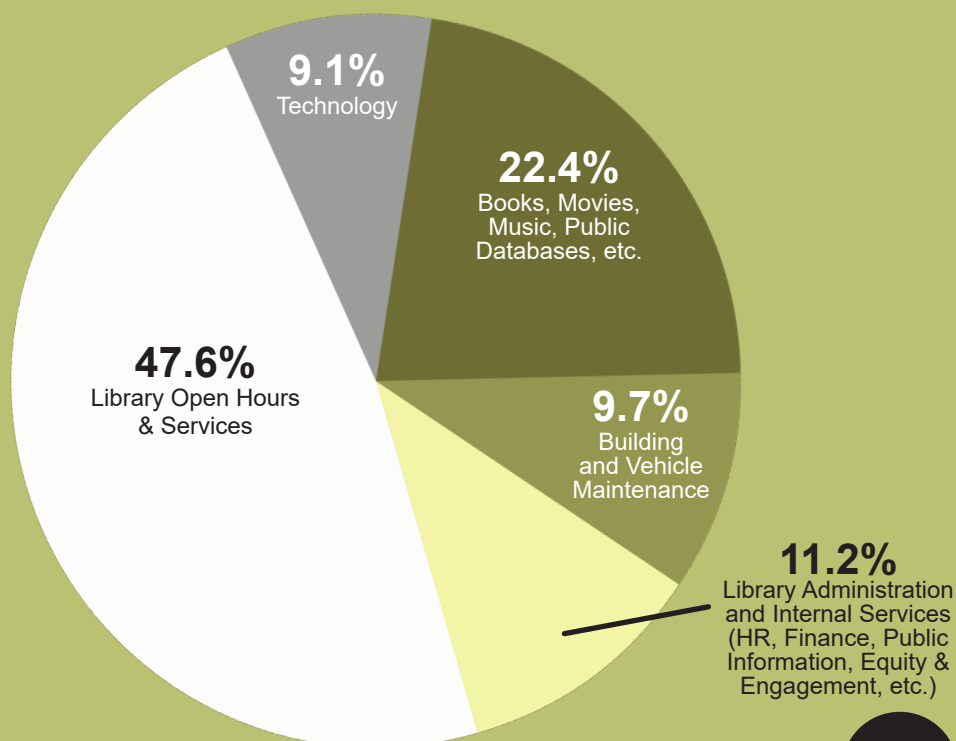
### Budget Closures in 2021-2022

- With a reduced budget, TPL partnered with our labor unions; in order to avoid permanent layoffs, all staff agreed to two-week furloughs per year (4% reduction in pay each year) with additional pay reductions to higher wage earners that insulated the library's lowest wage earners



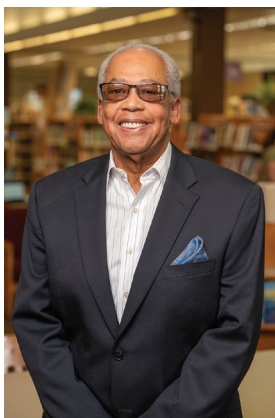
## TPL 2020 Budget

Total: \$13,994,814



# Board of Trustees

Tacoma Public Library is governed by a five member Board of Trustees appointed by the city's Mayor, and confirmed by a vote of the Tacoma City Council.



*Wayne Williams  
President, Board of  
Trustees*



*Sara Irish  
Vice President*



*Joseph Colón  
Trustee*



*Toni Craig  
Trustee*



*Donna LaFrance  
Trustee*

## tplfoundation

The newly revived Tacoma Public Library Foundation will work to support the mission and work of Tacoma Public Library through fundraising and advocacy. We are fortunate to have an incredible group of local leaders serve as Foundation Directors.



*Cortney Leach  
President*



*Rafael Saucedo  
Vice President*



*JR. Nobles  
Director*



*Andrew Kouklis  
Treasurer*



*Debbie Ranniger  
Secretary*



*Jamika Scott  
Asst. Secretary*



# TPL At a Glance



**1 Fern Hill Library**  
765 South 84th Street



**2 Kobetich Library**  
212 Browns Point Blvd NE



**3 Main Library**  
1102 Tacoma Avenue South



**4 Moore Library**  
215 South 56th Street



**5 Mottet Library**  
3523 East G Street



**6 South Tacoma Library**  
3411 South 56th Street



**7 Swasey Library**  
7001 6th Avenue



**8 Wheelock Library**  
3722 North 26th Street



**9 Eastside Microlibrary at Eastside Community Center**  
1721 East 56th Street

founded in  
**1903**

locations **9**

staff **114**

physical items  
in circulation

**523,867**

## Also offered at the Main Library:



The **Digital Media Lab** is a creative makerspace, providing access to digital media tools and collaboration in an inclusive and supportive space.



The **Northwest Room** collections and services are dedicated to offering comprehensive and accessible local and regional history information to the public.



The **Thomas Handforth Gallery** provides an opportunity for local, regional, and national artists to exhibit their work.



**Tacoma Tool Library**—a community partner offering low-cost access to shared tools—moved its operations to the second floor of the Main Library in 2020.

