



# Introduction

With our Strategic Plan guiding our work, and with 2020's lessons behind us, we took on the challenges and successes of 2021 with flexibility, empathy, and enhanced skills and practices in collaboration. This report is a summary of our successes over the past year and it showcases both internal organizational changes and TPL's accomplishments in public programs and services.

We continue to keep our community and staff's safety at the forefront of operational decisions as the COVID-19 pandemic wears on. A cross-functional team monitored and adjusted procedures to maintain safe environments in staff and public areas, consistently evaluating services and programs to ensure they were delivered safely and with minimal contact. We were able to safely reopen all our locations and restore hours of operation in the spring, requiring masks and social distancing in all facilities.

As we look to the year ahead, we are grateful for the ongoing support of our community, the Board of Trustees, and the Tacoma Public Library's Foundation. Thank you for supporting us in our mission to empower our community by bringing people together to discover, connect, create, learn, and thrive.



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.*

Tacoma Public Library will provide spaces, services, and resources that meet the diverse needs of our community. We strive to provide inclusive, friendly, and expert customer service and policies that remove—not create—barriers to access.

TPL suspended  
overdue fines in  
2020 and made the  
policy permanent  
in 2021, forgiving  
past fines—some  
decades old—  
totaling  
**\$517,836**



Mobile Hotspots  
**100**

TPL maintained community partnerships to expand mobile HotSpots offered to those without access to technology, reaching those most in need.





## Equity and Access, cont.

A Discover Pass allows access to millions of acres of state parks and other public recreation lands. Through a cooperative partnership with Washington State Parks and the Washington State Library, public library users can borrow passes for their outdoor adventures.

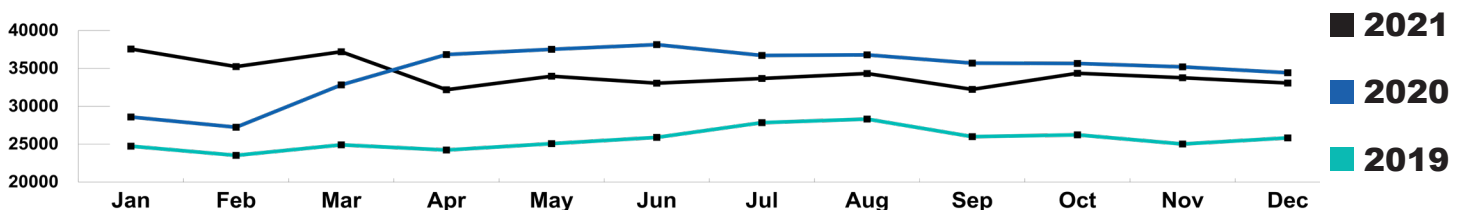


## Circulation & Highlights

Total digital checkouts in 2021 **410,674**



Access to eResources continues to play a vital role for patrons during the pandemic.



Programs & Events

**701**

Program Attendees

**12,422**

In Person Checkouts

**810,039**

Tacoma Public  
School Pathway  
Cards (21/22 school year)

**29,212**

New Library  
Cards Issued

**37,540**

New eCards Issued

**4,941**





## Equity and Access, cont.

We continue to be dedicated to the work of making Tacoma Public Library an anti-racist organization. This requires both a long-term vision as well as being open to shifting our perspectives through challenging curriculum, discussion, and introspection into our own biases and actions.

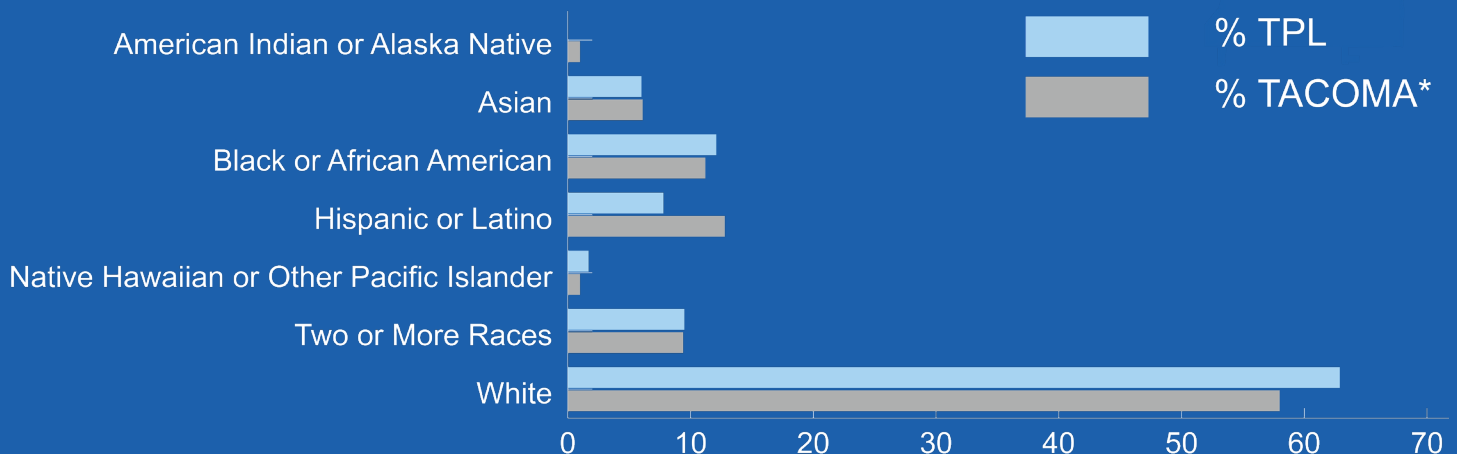
### One staff member describes the impact:

*"The normalizing conversations helped me to integrate the practices of anti-racism into my everyday work and life. TPL is dedicated to implementing anti-racism practices and philosophies at every level of the library. The normalizing conversations have never been easy, but they have made incredible change and progress in our work culture possible."*

A cross-functional team of staff formed a Race, Equity, and Social Justice (RESJ) committee that put together curriculum for staff discussions with the goal of normalizing conversations about race. The committee also formed affinity groups, furthering the daily work of integrating anti-racism into every decision and interaction in our organization.

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

In 2021, 80% of new hires were Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). Our organization better represents the communities we serve.



\*COT based on 2019 American Community Survey Estimates



## Equity and Access, cont.

### Community Archives Center at Tacoma Public Library



TPL's Northwest Room was awarded a grant of nearly \$250K from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to develop the Community Archives Center. This is a wide-ranging, two-year project in which community members and organizations will work together in a fully participatory process to broaden representation of marginalized groups in the Northwest Room's collection.

The Community Archives Center will create a national model for institutions in small- and mid-sized urban areas seeking to build collaborative partnerships with diverse groups to produce more equitable archives.





# Learning, Creativity, and Innovation



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

As we moved from virtual to a new hybrid of services and programs, we continued to offer programs that encouraged Learning, Creativity, and Innovation. Our librarians created take-home Program Kits so that our patrons young and old could explore world cultures and traditions, learn math, perform science experiments, and create art around themes and seasons—bringing the library home with them.



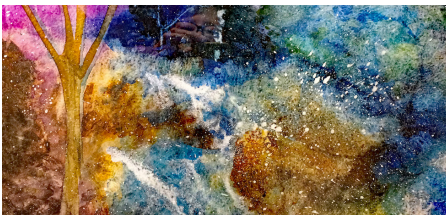
types of  
Program Kits

**84**

individual kits

**2,043**

The **Thomas Handforth Gallery** offered virtual exhibits featuring a wide range of Northwest artists and community partners.



Pacific Gallery Artists



Sherman Elementary



Puget Sound Sumi Artists



We Are Puget Sound





## Learning, Creativity, and Innovation, cont.



### **tplfoundation** raises funds for Digital Media Lab on Library Giving Day

Through a national fundraising campaign for public libraries called Library Giving Day, Tacoma Public Library Foundation raised **more than \$23K** for TPL's Digital Media Lab, a creators' studio utilized by filmmakers, musicians, audio engineers, students, podcast creators, and other creatives in Tacoma's thriving arts community. Thanks to the generous support of the Foundation, and GESA Credit Union who provided a matching gift, TPL exceeded its fundraising goal.

### **TPL added 24 Podcast Kits to its collection!**

Ongoing podcast workshops provide easily accessible, supportive environments for new podcasters to learn how to produce, record, edit, and stream their podcasts.

*PHOTO: Thea Foss Photo Scavenger Hunt participant*

TPL provided Thea Foss Photo Scavenger Hunt participants with cameras and instruction for this outdoor series held September–November.



# Investment in Youth



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

Throughout the summer of 2021, Youth Librarians hosted outdoor storytimes and dance parties for children and families.



PHOTO: Brian Cox



Tahoma Audubon Society, Metro Parks Tacoma, Pierce County Library System, and Tacoma Public Library presented **Poetry in the Park.**

Poetry printed on display signs were placed throughout seven different parks in Pierce County. A combination of classic nature poetry and local submissions around a nature theme provided a unique experience for visitors to explore and enjoy as they strolled the park trails.



PHOTO: Juanita Chavarria (babychavs.com)



## Investment in Youth, cont.

The Summer Reading Challenge ran from June 5 to August 16. Along with traditional paper reading logs (available in both English and Spanish) Tacoma Public Library utilized a new online platform called Beanstack, allowing participants to track reading minutes, collect badges, and even write book reviews!



### Summer Reading Challenge **At-A-Glance:**

virtual and  
in-person events

**153**

attendees

**2,769**

individual  
Program Kits

**641**

Creative Kits

**6,400**

sign-ups

**1,709**

completions

**608**



*Raffle prize winner at South Tacoma Library.*



# Cultivate and Engage Community



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

In partnership with the Puyallup Language Program and the City of Tacoma Office of Arts and Cultural Vitality, TPL distributed more than 400 free yard signs featuring art from three local Indigenous artists in Lushootseed, the language of the Puyallup peoples. The three artists are Paige Pettibon, Anthony Duenas, and Shaun Peterson.



Tacoma Public Library partners with the Pierce County Auditor's Office, Pierce County Library System, and Puyallup Public Library to offer voter assistance on Election Days. At the libraries people may:

- Register to vote
- Update voter registration
- Get a ballot and vote
- Replace ballots that have been lost, damaged, or mis-marked
- Get a voter's pamphlet



**3.7%** growth in followers  
**29k+** engagements

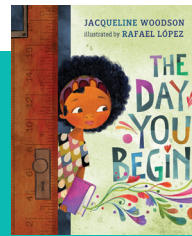
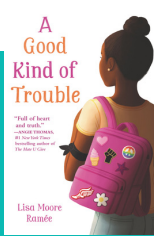
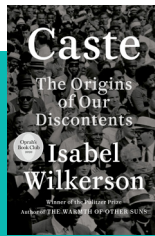


**23.1%** growth in followers  
**6.9%** growth in total engagement



**5.5%** growth in followers  
**32.4%** growth in total engagement

# Cultivate and Engage Community, cont.



Author Isabel Wilkerson

Tacoma Reads is a city-wide reading program that seeks to unite the community in dialogue around contemporary themes through reading a common text. A longstanding partnership between the City of Tacoma's Mayor's Office and the Tacoma Public Library, Tacoma Reads in 2021 was thrilled to have the support of the Tacoma Urban League as its premier sponsor.

Tacoma Reads 2021 focuses on the themes of race, social justice, and healing.

Utilizing our network of community partners is 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.





## Cultivate and Engage Community, cont.

In the **Northwest Room**, 2021 was a foundational year. It was a year that saw major changes and innovations designed to establish a new direction for special collections at Tacoma Public Library.



PHOTO: John Hargis

### New Acquisitions

- Archive of the Tacoma News Tribune, one of the largest collections ever received by TPL
- Stephen Cysewski Photographs, the largest digital collection ever received by TPL
- Papers of Gerald Davis, local business person involved with Tacoma's Heidelberg and Carling Brewing Companies
- Papers of Sallie Shawl, local activist
- Papers of Karen Vialle, Tacoma's first woman mayor
- Stallcup Family Papers, local family records dating back to 1889
- Christopher Petrich Photographs, former city photographer and studio owner

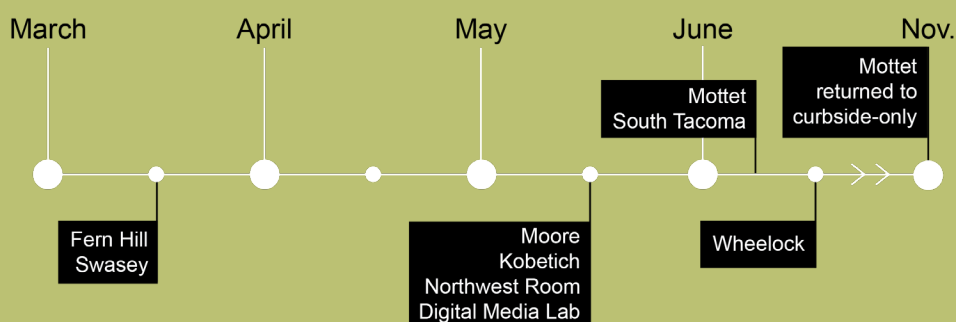
# Responsible and Resilient



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



In early 2021 and throughout the spring, all eight library buildings reopened to the public with enhanced safety measures, offering browsing, account services, holds pickup, checkouts, and more.



TPL distributed  
**10,227+ Free COVID-19 Test Kits**  
and hosted **4 COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics**  
in partnership with Tacoma-Pierce County  
Health Department.





## Responsible and Resilient, cont.

Technology and infrastructure upgrades in our IT and Facilities Departments improved library services and safety for patrons and staff:

installed **new public computers and printers** at all library buildings with more self-service features

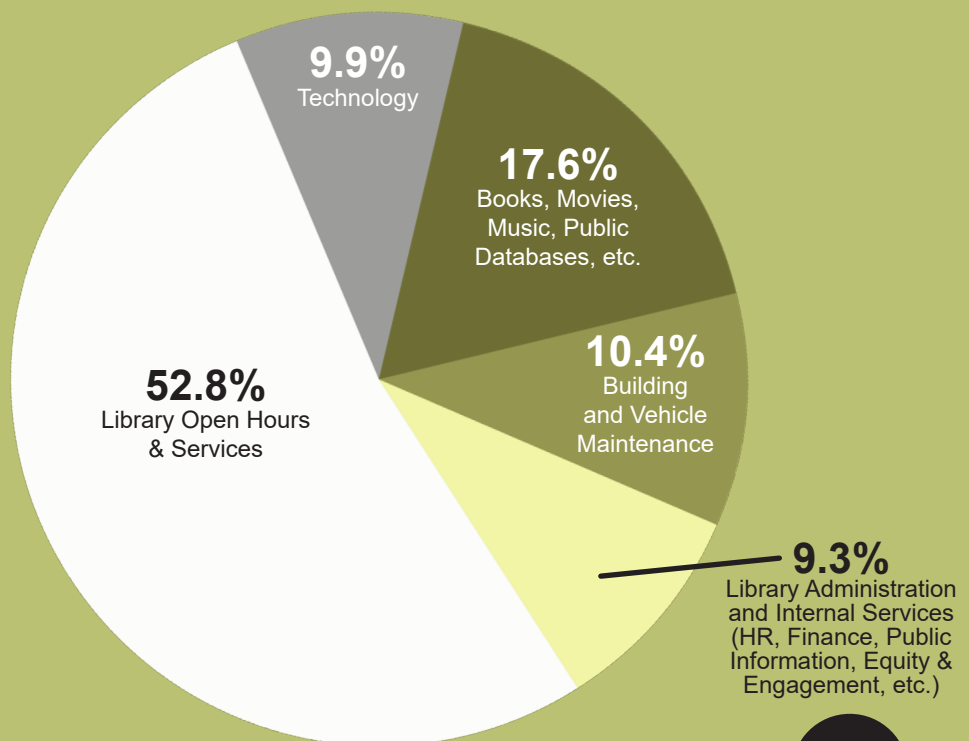
launched **free print and copy quota for patrons** (up to \$5 per week)  
modernized **public web filter**

retrofitted staff workspaces and public areas to **accommodate physical distancing**

**Tacoma Public Library underwent massive internal change in 2021 with implementing data collection and reporting across the organization.** Data is imperative to telling the story of how we are fulfilling our mission and strategic priorities, as well as showing us the gaps in our services, programs, facilities, and collections. We were fortunate to work with an intern from the Bloomberg-Harvard City Leadership Initiative to help us normalize the collection, input, reporting, and storing of data. **Better management of data will help us tell our story and track our progress toward reaching the goals put forth in our Strategic Plan.**

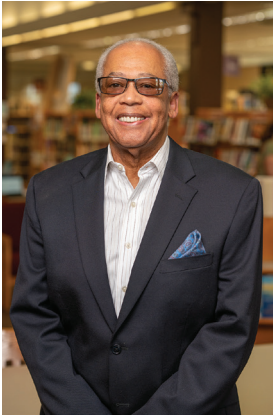
### TPL 2021 Budget

Total: \$14,447,140



# Board of Trustees

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



*Wayne Williams  
President,  
January–September*



*Sara Irish  
Vice President,  
January–September  
President,  
September–December*



*Joseph Colón  
Trustee*



*Toni Craig  
Trustee*



*Donna LaFrance  
Vice President,  
September–December*

## tplfoundation

The Tacoma Public Library Foundation was revived in 2021 with a focus on supporting the work of Tacoma Public Library through advocacy and fundraising, such as supporting the annual Library Giving Day campaign. A fantastic team of local leaders serve as the Foundation's Directors, contributing backgrounds and skills in financial management, fundraising, and community advocacy.



*Courtney Leach  
President*



*Rafael Saucedo  
Vice President*



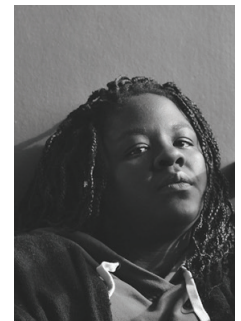
*JR. Nobles  
Director*



*Andrew Kouklis  
Treasurer*



*Debbie Ranniger  
Secretary*



*Jamika Scott  
Asst. Secretary*



# TPL At a Glance



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



**Kobetich  
Library**  
212 Browns Point  
Blvd NE



**Main Library**  
1102 Tacoma  
Avenue South



**Moore Library**  
215 South 56th  
Street



**Mottet Library**  
3523 East G Street



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



**Swasey Library**  
7001 6th Avenue



**Wheelock  
Library**  
3722 North 26th  
Street

established in

# 1894

## locations 8

staff **116**

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.