



2023 Annual Report

tacoma public library

Introduction

Looking back over the past year at Tacoma Public Library and reflecting on the challenges and successes of 2023, some themes emerge for me: collaboration, community, and welcoming.

First, I see an overarching theme of collaboration with our community partners, concurrent with the innovation that occurs within these sustained partnerships. As you'll read we are able to respond to these needs more effectively when we collaborate and share resources across organizations.

Second, I see how developing our role in the community has led to enhanced connections. By expanding our reach and making lasting connections both within our libraries and through outreach, 2023 saw a 11 percent increase in circulation, and a 10 percent increase in active library users. We are excited that more Tacoma residents are using their libraries!

Third, the theme of being radically welcoming. This phrase is imbedded in our vision statement, and it's one that Tacoma Public Library staff embody every day. As we welcome more community members to our libraries, we hope that our dedication to community partnerships, making last connections, and being radically welcoming is apparent. Thank you for your support over the past year as we continue to grow into our role as a trusted resource and hub for the community.



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.



**Responsible
and Resilient**



**Cultivate and
Engage Community**



Equity and Access



Investment in Youth



**Learning, Creativity,
and Innovation**

Cover photo: Brian Cox

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 under-served.

Partnership with Tacoma Needle Exchange

In response to the opioid crisis in our community, TPL partnered with Tacoma Needle Exchange to support patrons and staff with tangible resources:

- Naloxone boxes near AED machines in all libraries with instructions and safety equipment
- Distribution machine at Moore Library that dispenses free naloxone and fentanyl test strips
- Peer navigation services to more than 40 patrons including crisis support, medical care, mental health care, transportation, and housing support - one family of two, expecting a child, who were homeless for nearly a year, received permanent housing and got a job thanks to the help of the peer navigator
- Staff training on administering naloxone

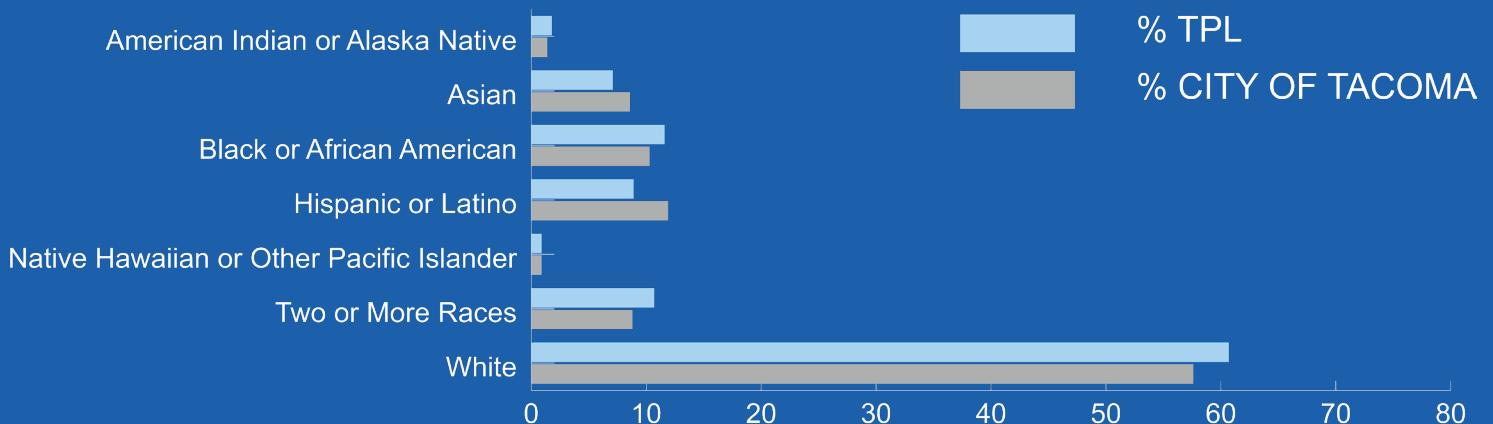


More than 3,200 doses of naloxone were distributed in 2023.



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

Over the past six years, TPL's workforce has been making steady progress towards reflecting the community we serve.



Equity and Access, cont.

Circulation Highlights 2023



Mobile Hotspot Kit
Checkouts

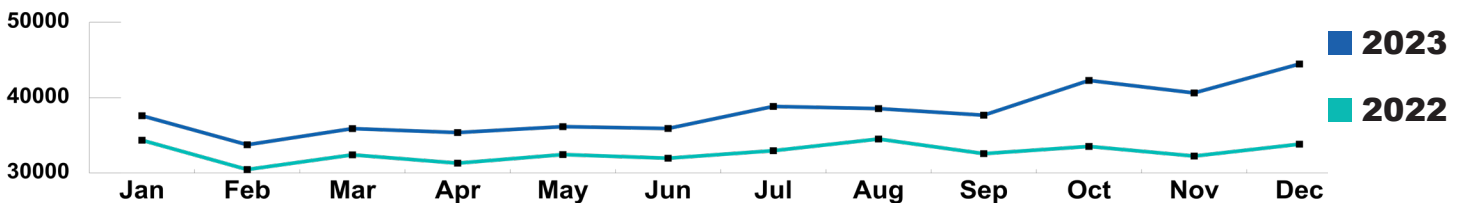
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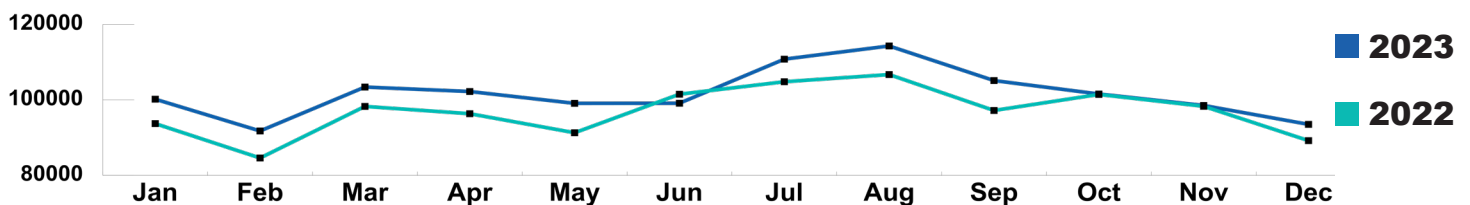
Podcast Kit
Checkouts

49

Digital Checkouts **457,102** (14% increase from 2022)



In Person Checkouts **1,219,582** (4.5% increase from 2022)



Digital Users

108,496

(17.5% increase from 2022)

In-Person Users

99,898

(9.5% increase from 2022)

Equity and Access, cont.

Partnership with Tacomaprobono

Free drop-in help, information, and resources from Tacomaprobono and the Office of Equity and Human Rights was made available in libraries with 51 tabling events.

Over 300 people received free legal help.



As the need for COVID-19 resources has continued, TPL has distributed over

23,000 COVID-19 Test Kits

3,000 COVID-19 Care Kits

1,900 N95 masks

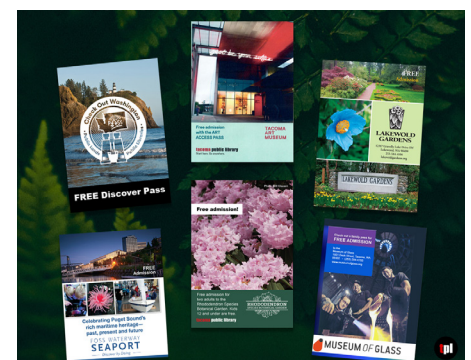
in partnership with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.



Museum and Local Attraction Passes

TPL provides access to local museums, parks, and attractions with passes that can be checked out to grant free admission.

More than 4,200 passes were checked out in 2023.



Learning, Creativity, and Innovation



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

Coding Camp Workshops

Thanks to a partnership with the Lifelong Kindergarten group at MIT Media Lab, TPL offered seven Coding Camps throughout the summer where over 85 attendees learned computational and problem-solving skills with an app called OctoStudio.



Digital Literacy and Continued Education

Drop in tech help and more formalized computer classes, offered in both English and Spanish, at multiple library locations offered patrons the opportunity to have personalized help navigating technology.

Appy Hour events helped patrons navigate TPL eResources and introduced applications including Libby and ePRINTit.



Learning, Creativity, and Innovation, cont.



Washington State University 4-H program of Pierce County provided STEAM activities at 13 events for grades K–5 to explore robots, bottle rockets, hydraulics, and more.

Tacoma Wayzgoose at Moore Library

Moore Library hosted Tacoma Wayzgoose, a letterpress and book arts extravaganza, in partnership with City of Tacoma's Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality and Write253. Students and local print artists designed lino cut prints to be pressed by a steam roller.



Investment in Youth



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

Staff handed out 400 free books and offered activities at the Verlo Playfield free lunch site in Tacoma's Eastside neighborhood.



Photo below: Brian Cox

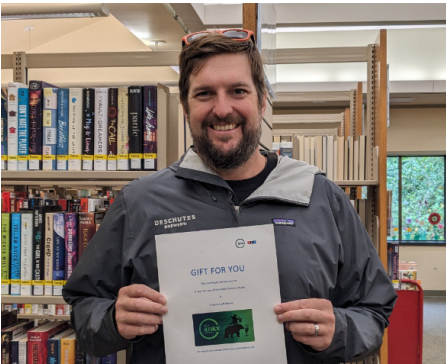
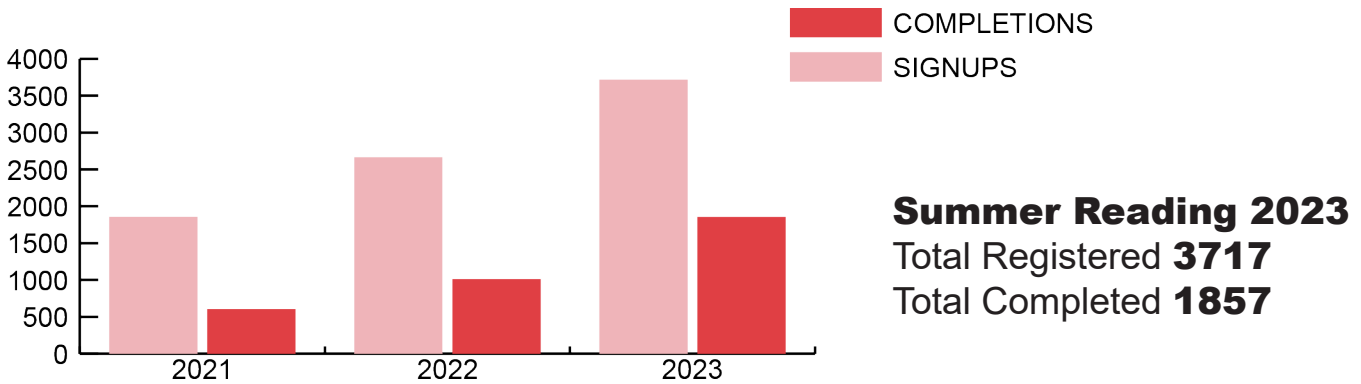


With support from the Tacoma Creates initiative, TPL partnered with Greentrike to offer **Play to Learn** weekly with more than **2521** attendees in 2023.

Investment in Youth, cont.

Summer Reading Challenge

The 2023 Summer Reading Challenge for all ages took place June 20–August 12. Participation saw a steady increase from the past year and a continuing increase since the return to in-person programming in 2021.



A few of the 2023 SRC raffle prize winners!



A crowd gathers for the Reptile Man on the lawn of Kobetich Library.

Investment in Youth, cont.

The Pathway Partnership

The partnership between Tacoma Public Library and Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) allows every TPS student (Pre-K–12) and teacher to have Tacoma Public Library access using their student or employee ID card.

New materials were developed in both English and Spanish to expand awareness of the Pathway Partnership at TPL, and were distributed through Tacoma Public Schools to promote the service directly to students.



2022–23 School Year Overview

Active students (at least 1 checkout): **1,227**

Physical items checked out: **7,820**

Pathway Overdrive (digital) users: **3,615**

Pathway Overdrive (digital) checkouts: **15,296**

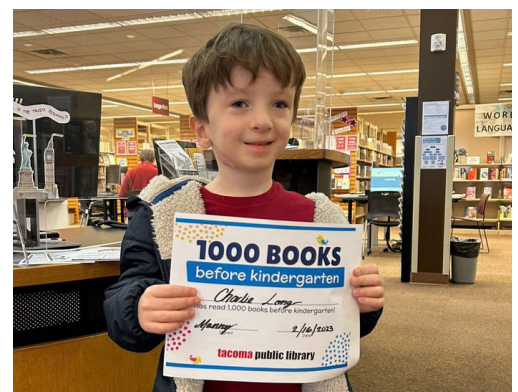
Pathway educator Overdrive (digital) users: **315**

Pathway educator checkouts: **1,463**

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

This year-round reading program for preschool-aged children continues to have strong participation and offers a fun way to develop early literacy skills. **Participants in 2023: 420** (with 63,938 books read!)

Top 12 most popular titles:



Cultivate and Engage Community



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



Author David Ambroz

Tacoma Reads is a longstanding partnership between the City of Tacoma's Mayor's Office and Tacoma Public Library, with wide community support and collaboration.

Tacoma Reads in 2023 was focused around the theme of **Home: housing insecurity in our community**. 2023 also saw the return to an in-person author event with author David Ambroz in conversation with Mayor Woodards, attended by 220 people and supported by partners and sponsors.



TPL staff attended outreach events in the community, including:

- Tacoma Moon Festival
- Tacoma Pride Festival
- T-Town
- Arts Night Out
- City of Destiny Festival
- Collaboration for a Cause
- Cushman Street Fair
- Educator Night at the Museum
- Festival Latinx
- Hilltop Street Fair
- Lunar New Year
- Mosaic: Tacoma's Arts and Culture Festival
- Proctor Arts Fest
- Project Homeless Connect



TPL staff speak with community member at Arts Night Out Block Party at Hilltop Artists. Photo: Merissa Humes Photo

Cultivate and Engage Community, cont.

The Northwest Room and Community Archives Center



Northwest Room
at Tacoma Public Library

The Northwest Room continued to pursue and implement a radically welcoming vision for local history collections at Tacoma Public Library. The two-year Community Archives Center project, which received a \$250,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, was completed in August 2023. The Tacoma community now has access to community-centered digital content and over 200 oral histories and interviews.



Community Archives Center
at Tacoma Public Library



Members of Latinx Unidos of the South Sound (LUSS) participate in an oral history interview.



A photo of Ella Carter on her 100th birthday. Carter arrived in Tacoma from New Orleans in 1903. (Christopher Petrich Photographs, Collection 2.1.5)

Outreach and Engagement

The Northwest Room and Community Archives Center engaged in a variety of outreach activities to connect with the community in new ways, including:

- **Hilltop Story Fest**, a full-day community event focused on documenting and sharing stories of the Hilltop neighborhood
- **Artists in the Archives**, an innovative new program which connects artists to Northwest Room collections to help inform and inspire their artwork
- **Neighborhood preservation events** in the South Tacoma, South End, West End, North End, Northeast, and Eastside communities
- **Preservation stations** at A Proud Heritage: African American Family History Event, Metro Parks Community Listening Sessions, City of Destiny Festival, and more

320 collections
now available in
Northwest ORCA

40 events
and outreach
activities

587 students
reached through
in-classroom
instruction

Cultivate and Engage Community, cont.

The Northwest Room and Community Archives Center, cont.

Education

Local history collections play an important role in supporting lifelong learning. The Northwest Room worked with educators across Pierce County to find ways to facilitate transformational encounters between students and archival materials.

Education projects undertaken by the Northwest Room include:

- Full-day workshop for over 100 Tacoma Public Schools teachers
- Provided in-class instruction for nearly 600 local students, including middle school, high school, and college undergraduates
- Developed lesson plans and primary source sets for classroom use
- Participated in Educator's Night to share information with teachers from across the region about instructional support offered by the Northwest Room



Below, “Armed: A DanCe Demonstration.” at Hilltop Story Fest.
Photo by Mikayla Heineck.



Responsible and Resilient



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

Technology upgrades in our **IT Department** continue to improve library services and patron experiences.



**50 new Mobile
Hotspot Kits**
added to circulation

Improved **public
printing
interfaces**

Created
flexible **staff
workstations**
with dock upgrades



Exterior rendering of the Main Library refresh. Exterior painting was completed in November, 2023.

The Main Library is undergoing a refresh to update the facility and realize the vision of spaces that will better utilize the expansive building to create a community hub. The first and second floor of the library will receive necessary repairs and reopen with a new layout that has space for community partner tenants whose missions align with Tacoma Public Library's. While construction is underway, Main Library will be closed, with an expected reopening date in 2024.

Responsible and Resilient, cont.

Grants and Awards

TPL actively seeks to maximize available funding opportunities.

City of Tacoma Heritage Grant

\$8,100



Washington Library Association Professional Development

\$2,000



Humanities Washington Prime Time Family Reading

\$25,000



IMLS Building Equity Based Summers

\$500



Department of Commerce

\$2,000,000

for Library Capital

\$96,500

for Solar + Storage



Kiwanis

\$1,000

for Main remodel



Washington State Library Professional Development

\$5,000



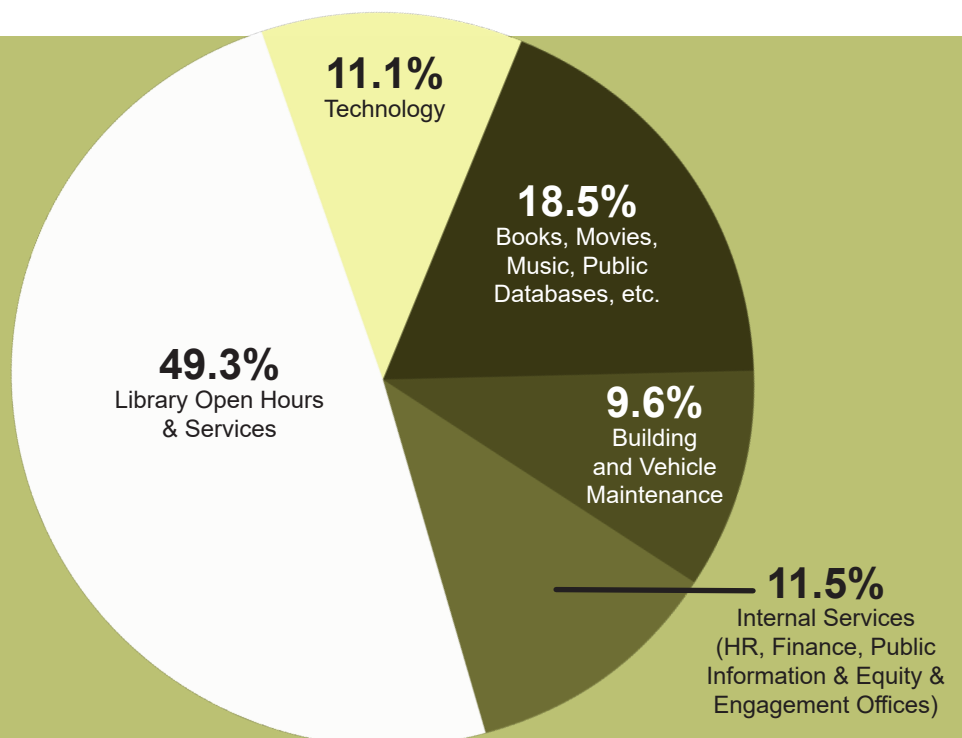
National Archives National Historical Publications and Records

\$126,328



TPL 2023 Budget

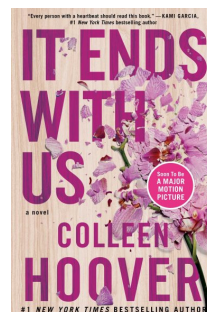
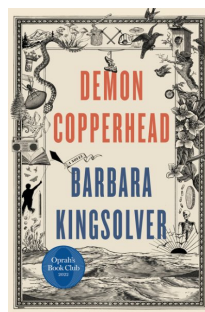
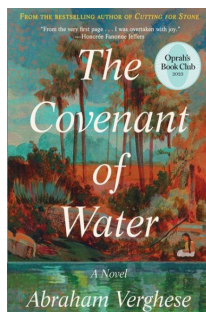
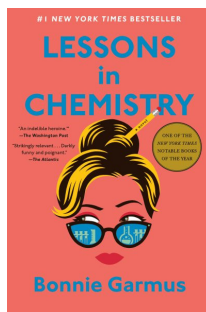
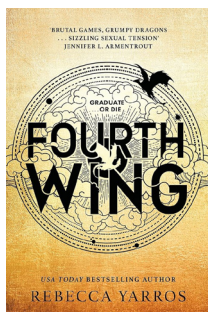
Total: \$17,368,458



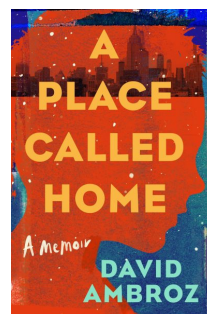
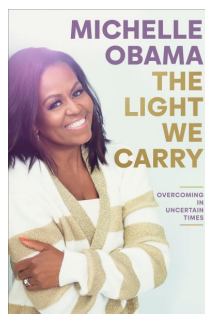
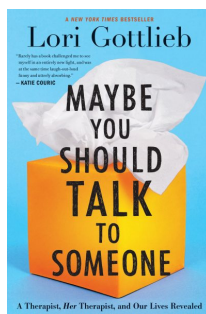
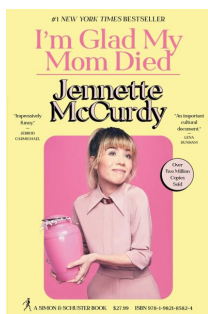
Responsible and Resilient, cont.

Top circulating titles of 2023

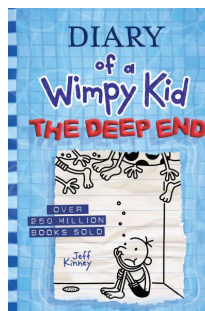
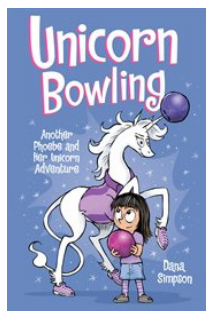
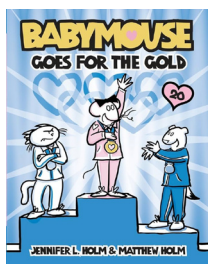
Adult Fiction



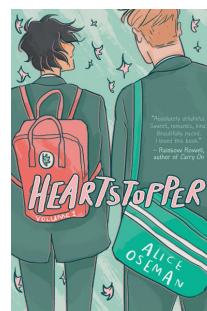
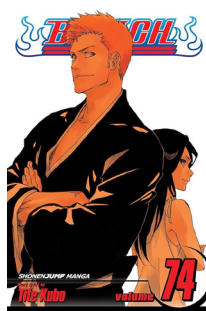
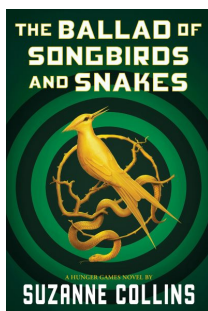
Adult Non-Fiction



Childrens



Teen



The **Tacoma Public Library Foundation** helps to fund important library programs and initiatives. This year TPLF raised nearly \$50,000 for new children's furniture at the Main library, funded the purchase of staff t-shirts, summer reading prizes, a marketing campaign (see below), and Pride merchandise. TPLF was reconstituted in 2021, and helps TPL grow stronger with each passing year.

You're due for a new adventure at Tacoma Public Library! Running from August 14–November 6, this campaign was designed to raise awareness for TPL and increase library card holders in our city.

The TPL Foundation supported this campaign which included bus ads, billboards, video ads on social media and in-theater at The Grand Cinema, a new library card design, community posters, and custom coasters distributed to local bars!

As a result of this campaign, there was a 14% increase in library card sign ups compared to the same time frame in 2022.



Billboard display, funded by the TPL Foundation.



Coaster spotted at The New Frontier in the Dome District.



A Book Buddy taking a trip on Pierce Transit.



On Library Giving Day the **Tacoma Public Library Foundation** raised more than **\$26k** to furnish the new children's area at Main Library.

Board of Directors

Wayne Williams, President, Board of Directors | President Emeritus, Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees

Bill Ryberg, Vice President, Board of Directors | Retired

Cortney Leach, Treasurer | Grants Manager, Tacoma Public Schools

Yazmin Carretero Aguilar, Secretary, Board of Directors | Foundation for Tacoma Students

JR. Nobles, Board of Directors | Executive Director, Friends of the Children Tacoma

Erin Bethel, Board of Directors | Tacoma Public Schools

Megan Smedsrud, Board of Directors | Senior Program Officer, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation

Jackis Coulibaly, Board of Directors | City of Tacoma

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

The Tacoma Public Library Foundation strengthens Tacoma's thriving communities by fueling our library system through philanthropy and outreach.

Vision

We believe libraries are vital to building strong, compassionate, and prepared communities, and that learning is a human right. Through outreach and philanthropy, the Foundation strengthens Tacoma Public Library's vision to be a radically welcoming, trusted community hub where all people can find joy, compassion, and inspiration.

Values

- Accessibility
- Social Justice
- Literacy + Learning
- Sustainability
- Creativity + Innovation
- Compassion

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.



Andrea Cobb
Trustee
Vice President,
January–August
President,
September–present



Sara Irish
President,
January–August
Vice President,
September–present



Donna LaFrance
Trustee,
January–September



Theresa Pan Hosley
Trustee



J. Manny Santiago
Trustee

Our Board of Trustees bring a wealth of experience, community involvement, professional skills, and connections to the governance of Tacoma Public Library. They make key decisions for the Library regarding policy, budget, and governance as we strive to become the library system Tacoma deserves.



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

founded in

1903

locations

8

staff

114

Also offered at the Main Library:



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