

Seattle Public Library

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Department Overview

Seattle Public Library (SPL), founded in 1891, includes the world-renowned Central Library, 26 neighborhood libraries, and a robust "virtual library" available 24/7 through SPL's popular website and Mobile Services. The Central Library and 26 neighborhood libraries provide essential services such as library collections, computers and Wi-Fi access, meeting rooms and study rooms, along with programs that promote lifelong learning, civic engagement, and economic vitality.

SPL is governed by a five-member Library Board of Trustees, who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Revised Code of Washington (RCW 27.12.240) and the City Charter (Article XII, Section 5) grant the Board of Trustees "exclusive control of Library expenditures for Library purposes." The Library Board adopts an annual Operations Plan in December after the City Council approves SPL's budget appropriation.

Budget Snapshot

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund	62,045,691	68,449,495	71,547,770	65,702,413
Other Funding - Operating	38,177,289	30,485,575	31,802,612	36,802,813
Total Operations	100,222,980	98,935,070	103,350,382	102,505,226
Capital Support				
Other Funding - Capital	8,879,332	8,375,000	7,587,000	2,587,000
Total Capital	8,879,332	8,375,000	7,587,000	2,587,000
Total Appropriations	109,102,312	107,310,070	110,937,382	105,092,226

Budget Overview

The City's 2026 Proposed Budget maintains core services for the Seattle Public Library (the Library). The department will continue to maintain consistent operating hours, offer a robust physical and electronic collection, and invest in community programs, while also engaging in national efforts such as providing access to banned books and advocating with lawmakers to address sharply escalating costs for digital materials. This budget reflects the last year of revenues from the 2019 Library Levy, and the Library is planning a levy renewal proposal in 2026.

To preserve critical City services due to the General Fund deficit, the Library is using levy funds designated for a capital project to fund operational expenses on a one-time basis which frees up General Fund resources. The levy funding was allocated to the Columbia Library seismic retrofit project, but project timelines have shifted, and the project won't be ready for construction prior to the end of this levy period. SPL anticipates including funding for the project in the upcoming levy renewal.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2026 Budget	FTE
Total 2026 Endorsed Budget	110,937,382	-
Baseline		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(227,852)	-
Proposed Operating		
Align Columbia Library Seismic Retrofit Budget with Project Timeline	-	-
Proposed Capital		
Reduce Columbia Library Seismic Retrofit Budget	(5,000,000)	-
Proposed Technical		
Bargained Annual Wage Adjustment to Base Budget	(940,154)	-
SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate Reduction	(52,200)	-
Fund Balancing	375,050	-
REET Allocation Adjustment	-	-
Revenue Adjustment	-	-
Fund Balancing - Library Fund and 2019 Library Levy Fund	-	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$(5,845,156)	-
Total 2026 Proposed Budget	\$105,092,226	-

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(227,852)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare and other central cost factors. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

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Proposed Operating

Align Columbia Library Seismic Retrofit Budget with Project Timeline

Expenditures

-

The Columbia Library Seismic Retrofit project is the final capital project under the 2019 Library Levy to address unreinforced masonry (URM) at three Carnegie-era branches. The URM projects overall were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; construction cost estimates for these projects, including the Columbia Library project, increased from inflationary pressure. This zero-sum item uses budget from the delayed project by shifting the capital budget to the operating budget on a one-time basis; the capital reduction is reflected in the Proposed Capital section. The General Fund contribution to Library operations is reduced by the same amount on a one-time basis. The Library plans to include funding for this project in the upcoming levy renewal proposal.

Proposed Capital

Reduce Columbia Library Seismic Retrofit Budget

Expenditures

\$(5,000,000)

This item reduces the Library's capital budget for the Columbia Library seismic retrofit project. These funds are shifted to the operating budget on a one-time basis, per the description in the Proposed Operating section. The Library plans to include funding for this project in the upcoming levy renewal proposal.

Proposed Technical

Bargained Annual Wage Adjustment to Base Budget

Expenditures

\$(940,154)

This centrally administered change adjusts base budget appropriations to reflect the proper Annual Wage Increase (AWI) increment for 2026, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of City Unions for personnel costs. AWI increments are determined based on the average change in the local Consumer Price Index (CPI). This change represents a true-up between the forecasted CPI assumption included in the Endorsed Budget and the actual CPI data.

SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate Reduction

Expenditures

\$(52,200)

The City's employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS) is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings. Based on the updated actuarial valuation for 2025, this item reduces the employer contribution rate from the endorsed rate of 15.17% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 15.06%.

Fund Balancing

Expenditures

\$375,050

This is a technical adjustment to bring the beginning balance for the 2019 Levy Fund into alignment with the spending plan associated with the voter approved 2019 Library Levy, in addition to net cost impacts associated with a labor bargaining agreement.

REET Allocation Adjustment

Expenditures

-

This is a technical adjustment for Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) budget authority for the Library's Major Maintenance

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capital project over multiple outyears. The Library's Major Maintenance capital project is for improvements and maintenance for the Central Library and all 26 branch libraries as well as separate storage and shops facilities. For more information, see Proposed 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Program.

Revenue Adjustment

Revenues	\$(5,845,357)
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This technical item decreases revenue to reflect commensurate decreases in expenditures in the 2026 Proposed Budget for Seattle Public Library.

Fund Balancing - Library Fund and 2019 Library Levy Fund

Revenues	\$5,876,999
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This is a technical item to record a fund balancing entry for the Library Fund and 2019 Library Levy Fund, which are primarily managed by this department.

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Expenditure Overview

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Appropriations				
SPL - BC-PL-B3000 - Capital Improvements				
10410 - Library Fund	5,200	-	-	-
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	1,154,184	-	-	-
18100 - 2012 Library Levy Fund	21,917	-	-	-
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	6,023,200	7,989,000	6,982,000	1,982,000
30010 - REET I Capital Fund	844,266	386,000	605,000	605,000
Total for BSL: BC-PL-B3000	8,048,767	8,375,000	7,587,000	2,587,000
SPL - BO-PL-B1ADM - Administrative/Support Service				
10410 - Library Fund	9,975,918	11,541,462	12,075,901	11,944,625
18100 - 2012 Library Levy Fund	9,250	-	-	-
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	2,982,744	4,148,634	4,356,324	4,308,983
Total for BSL: BO-PL-B1ADM	12,967,912	15,690,096	16,432,226	16,253,608
SPL - BO-PL-B2CTL - Chief Librarian's Office				
10410 - Library Fund	665,328	636,999	669,210	659,947
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	170,163	100,000	100,000	100,000
Total for BSL: BO-PL-B2CTL	835,492	736,999	769,210	759,947
SPL - BO-PL-B4PUB - Library Program and Services				
10410 - Library Fund	50,544,697	53,039,090	55,539,236	49,923,007
18100 - 2012 Library Levy Fund	98,932	700,000	-	-
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	20,483,906	23,845,251	25,445,856	30,506,033
Total for BSL: BO-PL-B4PUB	71,127,535	77,584,340	80,985,092	80,429,041
SPL - BO-PL-B5HRS - Human Resources				
10410 - Library Fund	2,971,434	2,777,446	2,916,792	2,844,796
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	78,354	29,450	30,390	28,970
Total for BSL: BO-PL-B5HRS	3,049,788	2,806,895	2,947,182	2,873,766
SPL - BO-PL-B7STR - Institutional & Strategic Advancement				
10410 - Library Fund	1,396,943	1,346,500	1,404,445	1,387,853
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	701,824	770,241	812,229	801,014
Total for BSL: BO-PL-B7STR	2,098,766	2,116,740	2,216,673	2,188,866
SPL - BO-PL-B9LA - Leadership and Administration				
10410 - Library Fund	3,789,059	-	-	-
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	1,223,894	-	-	-
Total for BSL: BO-PL-B9LA	5,012,953	-	-	-

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Department Total	103,141,213	107,310,070	110,937,382	105,092,226
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** FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here*

Budget Summary by Fund Seattle Public Library

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
10410 - Library Fund	69,348,580	69,341,495	72,605,584	66,760,226
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	1,154,184	-	-	-
18100 - 2012 Library Levy Fund	130,099	700,000	-	-
18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund	31,664,084	36,882,575	37,726,798	37,727,000
30010 - REET I Capital Fund	844,266	386,000	605,000	605,000
Budget Totals for SPL	103,141,213	107,310,070	110,937,382	105,092,226

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Revenue Overview

2026 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
330020	Intergov-Revenues	7,685	27,000	27,000	27,000
333110	Ind Fed Grants	(806)	-	-	-
334010	State Grants	28,496	-	-	-
335060	Judicial Salary Contrib-State	227	-	-	-
341050	Word Proc/Printing/Dupl Svcs	93,979	100,000	105,000	105,000
350130	Library Fines and Fees	64,811	120,000	120,000	120,000
360290	Parking Fees	314,159	377,000	390,000	390,000
360300	St Space Facilities Rentals	124,105	150,000	150,000	150,000
360310	Lt Space/Facilities Leases	18,890	-	-	-
360340	Concession Proceeds	1,553	1,500	1,500	1,500
360370	Insurance Prems & Recoveries	14,688	-	-	-
360380	Sale Of Junk Or Salvage	56,413	85,000	85,000	85,000
360900	Miscellaneous Revs-Other Rev	-	1,500	1,500	1,500
397010	Operating Transfers In	67,739,060	68,479,495	71,547,770	65,702,413
397200	Interfund Revenue	-	166,187	177,814	177,814
Total Revenues for: 10410 - Library Fund		68,463,258	69,507,682	72,605,584	66,760,227
400000	Use of/Contribution to Fund Balance	-	(166,187)	(1)	(1)
Total Resources for:10410 - Library Fund		68,463,258	69,341,495	72,605,584	66,760,226
311010	Real & Personal Property Taxes	203	1,000	-	-
360010	Investment Interest	-	7,000	-	-
Total Revenues for: 18100 - 2012 Library Levy Fund		203	8,000	-	-
400000	Use of/Contribution to Fund Balance	-	692,000	-	-
Total Resources for:18100 - 2012 Library Levy Fund		203	700,000	-	-
311010	Real & Personal Property Taxes	30,969,313	31,920,000	31,750,000	31,750,000
360010	Investment Interest	-	500,000	100,000	100,000
Total Revenues for: 18200 - 2019 Library Levy Fund		30,969,313	32,420,000	31,850,000	31,850,000
400000	Use of/Contribution to Fund Balance	-	4,462,575	5,876,798	5,877,000
Total Resources for:18200 - 2019 Library Levy		30,969,313	36,882,575	37,726,798	37,727,000

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Fund

Total SPL Resources	99,432,774	106,924,070	110,332,382	104,487,227
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Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

SPL - BC-PL-B3000 - Capital Improvements

The purpose of The Seattle Public Library Capital Improvements Budget Summary Level is to provide major maintenance to Library facilities, which include the Central Library and all branch libraries, to help ensure building integrity and improve functionality for patrons and staff.

Program Expenditures	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Capital Improvements	8,107,882	8,375,000	7,113,000	2,113,000
IT Infrastructure	771,449	-	474,000	474,000
Total	8,879,332	8,375,000	7,587,000	2,587,000

**FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here*

The following information summarizes the programs in Capital Improvements Budget Summary Level:

Capital Improvements

The purpose of the Capital Improvements program is to support the delivery of capital improvements.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Capital Improvements	8,107,882	8,375,000	7,113,000	2,113,000

IT Infrastructure

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
IT Infrastructure	771,449	-	474,000	474,000

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SPL - BO-PL-B1ADM - Administrative/Support Service

The purpose of the Administrative Services Program is to support the delivery of library services to the public through providing services such as financial services, capital and operating budget planning and management, facilities maintenance and landscaping, and security services.

Program Expenditures	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Administrative Services	697,893	1,049,482	1,081,752	1,072,860
Business Office	1,660,174	2,228,346	2,404,145	2,376,622
Event Services	455,711	862,307	908,162	896,236
FAC Services	7,838,595	11,549,960	12,038,166	11,907,889
Security Services	2,541,069	-	-	-
Total	13,193,442	15,690,096	16,432,226	16,253,608

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The following information summarizes the programs in Administrative/Support Service Budget Summary Level:

Administrative Services

The purpose of the Administrative Services Program is to support the delivery of library services to the public.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Administrative Services	697,893	1,049,482	1,081,752	1,072,860

Business Office

The purpose of the Business Office Program is to support the delivery of administrative services.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Business Office	1,660,174	2,228,346	2,404,145	2,376,622

Event Services

The purpose of the Events Services Program is to support Library-hosted as well as private events and programs in order to make Library facilities and meeting rooms more available to the public.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Event Services	455,711	862,307	908,162	896,236

FAC Services

The purpose of the FAC Services Program is to maintain and secure the Library's buildings and grounds so that library

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services are delivered in safe, secure, clean, well-functioning and comfortable environments.

	2024	2025	2026	2026
Expenditures/FTE	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
FAC Services	7,838,595	11,549,960	12,038,166	11,907,889

Security Services

	2024	2025	2026	2026
Expenditures/FTE	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
Security Services	2,541,069	-	-	-

SPL - BO-PL-B2CTL - Chief Librarian's Office

The purpose of the Chief Librarian's Office is to provide leadership for the Library in implementing the policies and strategic direction set by the Library Board of Trustees, and in securing the necessary financial resources to operate the Library in an effective and efficient manner. The Chief Librarian's Office serves as the primary link between the community and the Library, and integrates community needs and expectations with Library resources and policies.

Program Expenditures	2024	2025	2026	2026
	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
Chief Librarian's Office	936,969	736,999	769,210	759,947
Total	936,969	736,999	769,210	759,947

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SPL - BO-PL-B4PUB - Library Program and Services

The purpose of the Library Programs and Services Division is to provide services, materials, and programs that benefit and are valued by Library patrons. Library Programs and Services provides technical and collection services and materials delivery systems to make Library resources and materials accessible to all patrons.

Program Expenditures	2024	2025	2026	2026
	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Proposed
Collections and Access	21,766,817	21,144,594	21,785,949	21,595,932
Information Technology	7,908,935	6,382,026	6,672,052	6,661,454
Public Library Services Admin	2,290,009	-	-	-
Public Services	38,098,219	50,057,720	52,527,090	52,171,654
Service Units	5,413,231	-	-	-
Total	75,477,211	77,584,340	80,985,092	80,429,041

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The following information summarizes the programs in Library Program and Services Budget Summary Level:

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Collections and Access

The purpose of the Collection and Access Services Program is to make library books, materials, databases, downloadable materials, and the library catalog available to patrons and to provide a delivery system that makes Library materials locally available.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Collections and Access	21,766,817	21,144,594	21,785,949	21,595,932

Information Technology

The purpose of the Information Technology Program is to provide public and staff technology, data processing infrastructure and services.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Information Technology	7,908,935	6,382,026	6,672,052	6,661,454

Public Library Services Admin

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Public Library Services Admin	2,290,009	-	-	-

Public Services

The purpose of the Library Programs and Services Program is to administer public services, programs, and collection development and access.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Public Services	38,098,219	50,057,720	52,527,090	52,171,654

Service Units

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Service Units	5,413,231	-	-	-

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SPL - BO-PL-B5HRS - Human Resources

The purpose of Human Resources is to provide responsive and equitable services, including human resources policy development, recruitment, classification and compensation, payroll, labor and employee relations, volunteer services, and staff training services so that the Library maintains a productive and well-supported work force.

Program Expenditures	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Human Resources	2,900,058	2,806,895	2,947,182	2,873,766
Safety & Health Services	162,222	-	-	-
Total	3,062,280	2,806,895	2,947,182	2,873,766

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The following information summarizes the programs in Human Resources Budget Summary Level:

Human Resources

The purpose of Human Resources is to provide responsive and equitable services, including human resources policy development, recruitment, classification and compensation, payroll, labor and employee relations, volunteer services, and staff training services so that the Library maintains a productive and well-supported work force.

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Human Resources	2,900,058	2,806,895	2,947,182	2,873,766

Safety & Health Services

Expenditures/FTE	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Safety & Health Services	162,222	-	-	-

SPL - BO-PL-B7STR - Institutional & Strategic Advancement

The purpose of the Institutional and Strategic Advancement division is to provide planning and support functions, including strategic analysis, government relations, community partnerships and external and internal communication, to help the City Librarian shape the strategic direction, work and culture of the Library in pursuit of its mission. The division ensures that the public is informed about services and programs offered by the Library.

Program Expenditures	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Institutional & Strategic Advancement	2,540,125	2,116,740	2,216,673	2,188,866
Total	2,540,125	2,116,740	2,216,673	2,188,866

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SPL - BO-PL-B9LA - Leadership and Administration

Program Expenditures	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Proposed
Citywide Indirect Costs	5,012,953	-	-	-
Total	5,012,953	-	-	-

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