

# San Francisco Public Library Annual Report FY 2023-2024



*San Francisco Public Library*





**Libraries For All**





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# Leadership

London N. Breed  
**Mayor**

## **Commissioners**

Connie Wolf 2018–2026

**President**

Pete Huang 2018–2025

**Vice President**

Jarie Bolander 2022–2026

Dr. Eurania Isabel López 2020–2026

Susan Mall 2013–2025

Teresa Ono 2009–2025

Dr. Mary J. Lomax-Ghiraduzzi 2014–2026

Michael Lambert

**City Librarian**

Maureen Singleton

**Chief Operating Officer**

Dolly Goyal

**Chief of Public Services**

Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor

**Chief of Branches**

Shellie Cocking

**Chief of Collections & Technical Services**

Michelle Jeffers

**Chief of Community Programs & Partnerships**

Mike Fernandez

**Chief Financial Officer**

Randle McClure

**Chief Analytics Officer**

Jason Blandón

**Acting Chief Information Officer**

John Cunha

**Director of Facilities**

Jaime Wong

**Acting Director of Communications**

Lori Regler

**Library Human Resources Director**

Naomi Jelks

**Racial Equity Manager**

Margot Shaub

**Commission Affairs Analyst**



Photo by Kit Castagne











# A New Chapter for San Francisco Public Library

## Dear friends,

What an exciting and busy year it has been! This past spring, San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) unveiled *Vision 2030*, a bold new strategic plan aspiring to establish a democratic, equitable and vibrant San Francisco for everyone, where library workers are helping our residents to connect to learning, opportunities and each other. With the 25-year renewal of the Library Preservation Fund by San Francisco residents in 2022, we embarked on a yearlong discovery and development process to co-create this plan with the community and our mission-driven workforce. When *Vision 2030* was finalized, we were thrilled to share it far and wide, and to start the work of transforming into reality the hopes and wishes of our residents.

The new vision, mission and organizational core values defined in our strategic plan now guide everything we do. As we embark on this journey to be the premier urban library in the country by 2030, we will continue to honor our traditional roles as a champion for literacy and as a resource provider. We are also excited to introduce new service lines as we seek to be a cultural amplifier, community catalyzer and thoughtful navigator to provide the highest possible level of service to our community. It's ambitious, we know, but we're truly eager to craft the future of the Library to be the best it has ever been in order to meet the needs of San Franciscans.

Here, in the pages of our 2023–24 Annual Report, I invite you to discover how we are already taking steps to ensure that people have the tools they need to make informed decisions, and to give everyone access to the resources and opportunities necessary for improving their quality of life. Ultimately, our vision leads to affirming every individual in our City to feel welcomed, included and celebrated at the Library. Thank you for your ongoing support and patronage.

In community,



**City Librarian**  
**Michael Lambert**



## HIGHLIGHTS

### New City Archivist

San Francisco has a new City Archivist! Following the retirement of Susan Goldstein in 2023, Adrienne Storey started her new role in the San Francisco History Center in 2024. Storey has a strong background in archives, records and content management in a variety of special collections contexts including academic, community and institutional archives. Storey joins SFPL following a tenure as Director of Archives and Art Resources at SFMOMA, five years with the San Francisco Symphony as Associate Director of Archives and Records Management and a lengthy engagement with the Karuk Tribe as a project manager and consultant in projects related to the Karuk Tribe's libraries, archive and museum. Storey started her career in place-based special collections and is excited to return to that context as City Archivist.

### Talking Books and Braille Center Renovation

On November 8, 2023, the Library reopened its award-winning Talking Books and Braille Center (TBBC) after a \$1.9 million renovation and a 15-month closure. The Center, which serves individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired, underwent a transformation to better cater to the needs of the community. The renovation project, which commenced on August 15, 2022, was a collaborative effort involving Library staff, San Francisco Public Works, the TBBC Advisory Committee and architect Chris Downey, who is himself sightless. The goal was to create a welcoming and inclusive space for the Blind, Low-Vision and Print Disabled communities in San Francisco.

### Read to Recovery Launch

Read to Recovery is SFPL's initiative to provide free-to-keep books from a variety of self-help, 12-step and other mutual-help support groups focused on recovery from addiction. Started as a pilot in April 2023 at the Main Library, Park and Mission Bay Branches, the program took a significant step forward this year. At a press conference in February 2024, District 6 Supervisor Matt Dorsey announced legislation to formally establish the Read to Recovery program of the San Francisco Public Library. Co-sponsored by Supervisors Rafael Mandelman and Catherine Stefani, the program created by the proposed legislation will offer free-to-keep recovery literature and basic texts, in all available languages, from the myriad mutual-help program traditions for individuals seeking recovery from substance use disorders, alcohol use disorders, non-substance-related addictive disorders and their related co-dependencies. A library card is not required for anyone to benefit from the program's offerings. This legislation calls for the expansion of this program to all 27 branch libraries and was signed into law by Mayor London Breed in the fall of 2024.

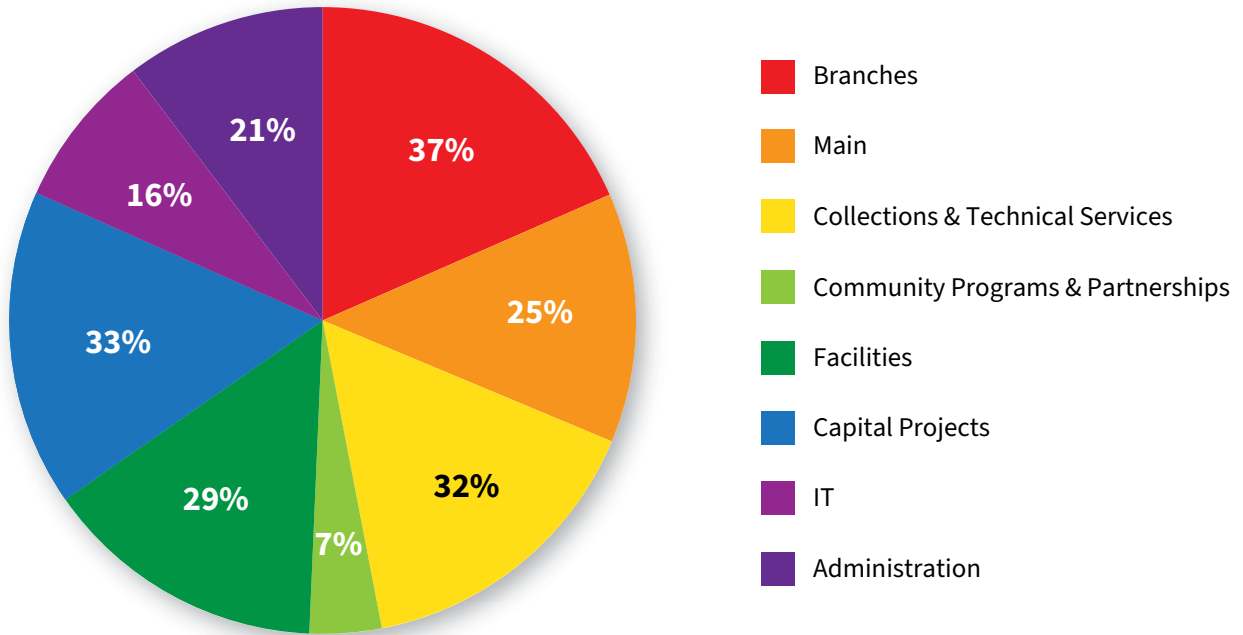






# SFPL Budget

Total Expenditures: \$199.43 Million

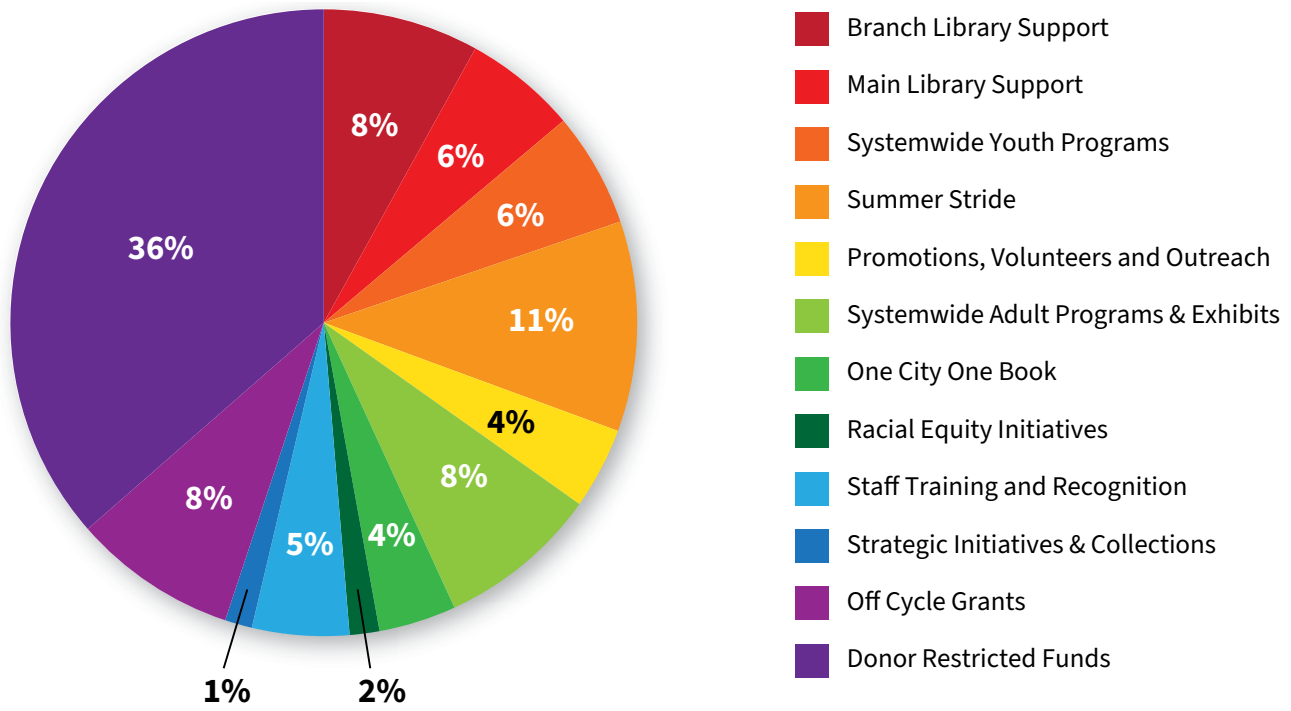


USES BY DIVISIONS (BUDGET IN MILLIONS)	FY24
Branches	\$36.74
Main	\$25.69
Collections & Technical Services	\$31.24
Community Programs & Partnerships	\$7.40
Facilities	\$29.21
Capital Projects	\$32.60
IT	\$15.94
Administration	\$20.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$199.43</b>



# Friends of the San Francisco Public Library Budget

Total Grant Expenditures FY 2023–24



Friends and Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library underwrites the Library’s incredible array of public programs, including:

- Main Library programs at the History Center, affinity centers, The Bridge at Main and special collections
- Literacy and learning programs, such as Summer Stride, STEM classes and The Mix at the Main
- Literary events, cultural programs, exhibitions and branch events and activities, and cultural outreach ambassadors
- System-wide cultural celebrations, such as ¡VIVA! Latinx Heritage, More Than a Month: Black History & Culture, Weaving Stories: Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Heritage, HERStory, Filipino American History Month and Pride
- Adult lifelong learning programs that cover topics including jobs and careers, small business, digital literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Helping SFPL remain one of the best libraries in the US by supporting leadership development, service innovation and implementation of the Library’s Racial Equity Action Plan

Branch Library Support	\$73,600
Main Library Support	\$53,200
Systemwide Youth Programs	\$54,100
Summer Stride	\$99,200
Promotions, Volunteers and Outreach	\$38,500
Systemwide Adult Programs & Exhibits	\$76,300
One City One Book	\$36,600
Racial Equity Initiatives	\$14,000
Staff Training and Recognition	\$45,800
Strategic Initiatives & Collections	\$12,900
Off Cycle Grants	\$77,600
Donor Restricted Funds	\$333,300
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$915,000</b>

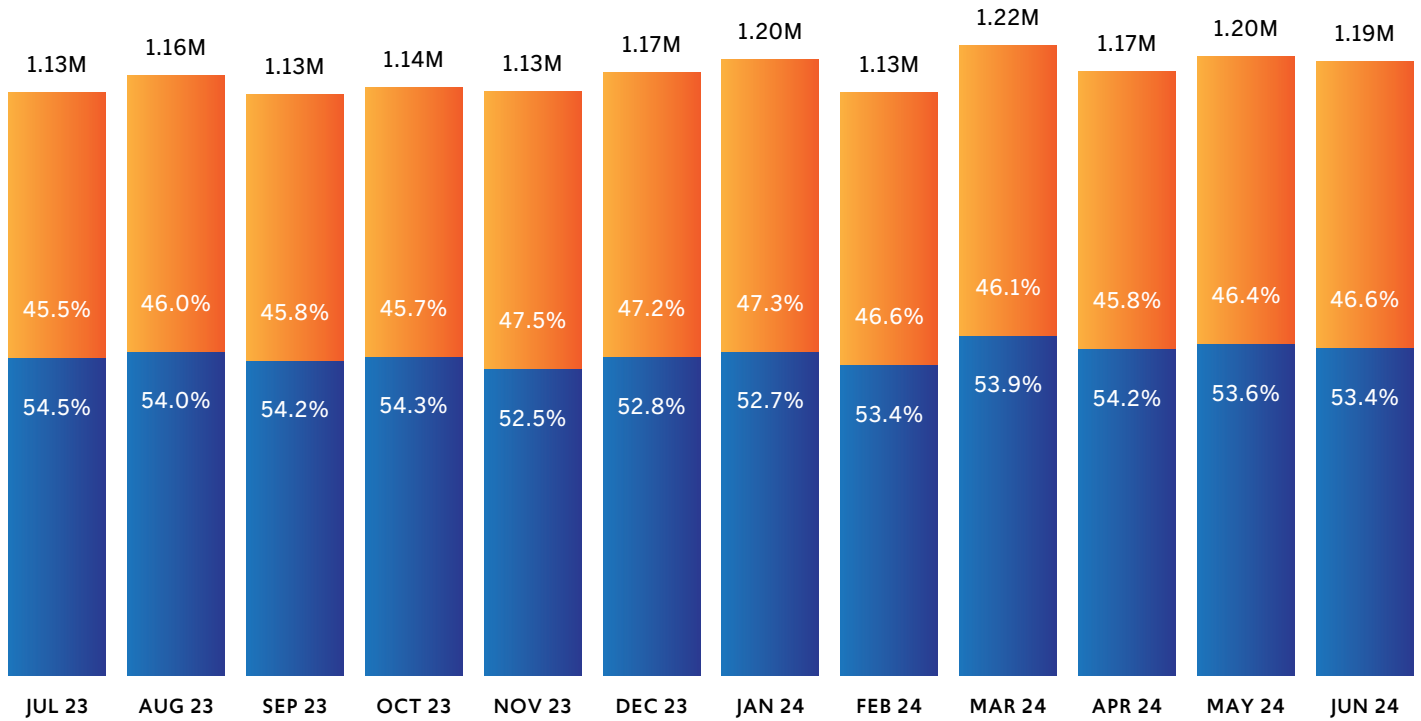


# Circulation Data

**Circulation: 14,043,125**

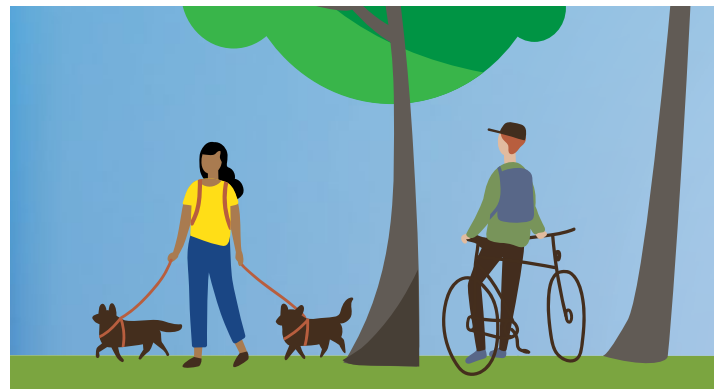
**eCirculation: 6,509,238**

**Physical: 7,533,887**



**452.6K**  
PHYSICAL MATERIALS added to the collection

**78.3K**  
PHYSICAL MATERIALS added in languages other than English



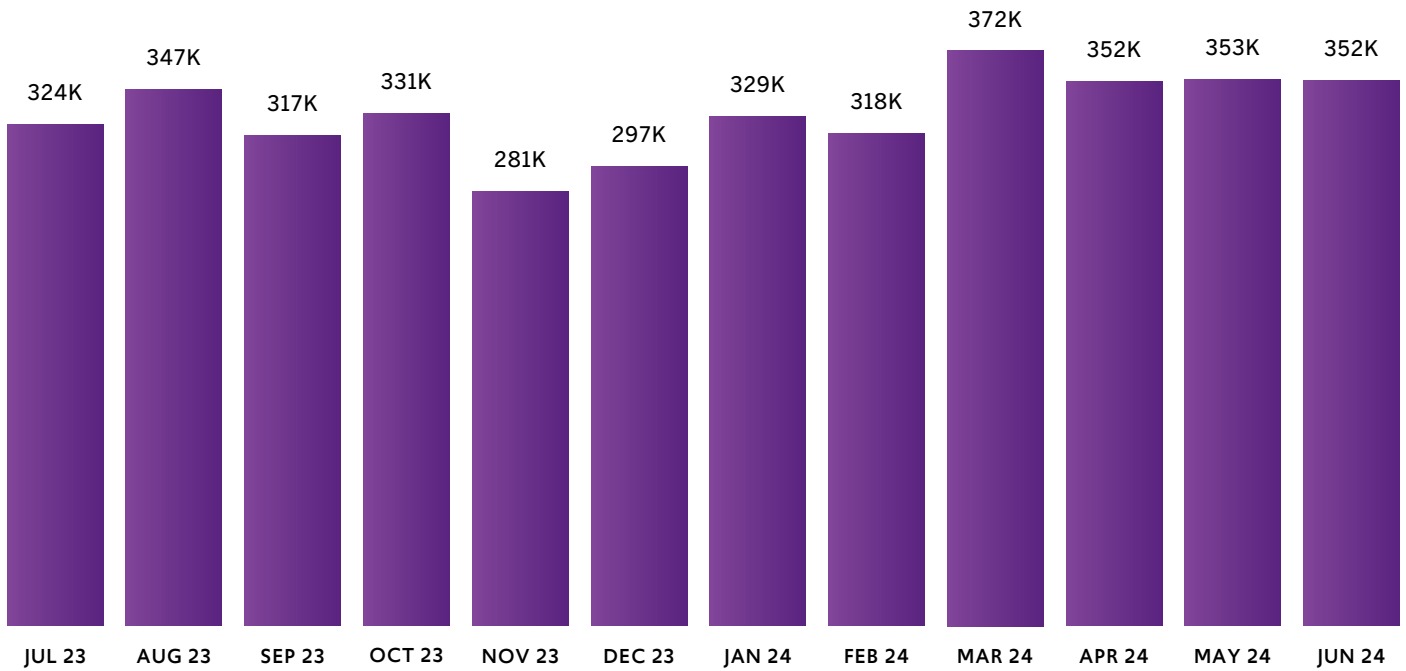
**599**  
PARK PASSES in circulation

**5.47K**  
TIMES PARK PASSES were checked out



# In-Person Visits

Total: 3,976,556



**933**  
MEETING  
ROOMS USED  
by community  
groups

**11.1K**  
PATRON  
CONTACTS  
made by SFPL's  
Social Service Team



## You Asked, We Answered

**30.3K**  
ONLINE  
QUESTIONS  
ANSWERED

**497K**  
REFERENCE  
QUESTIONS  
ANSWERED  
in person



# Computers and Wi-Fi

**340.9K**

**HOURS USED**  
by patrons at  
public computer  
terminals

**8.33K**

**WI-FI USERS**  
per day at the  
Main and Branch  
Libraries



Patron comment: *“Going to college was very expensive for my family and I to afford. I used the Public Library to complete most of my assignments, I did not have access to the internet or computer equipment. I managed to complete college using the Public Library system.”*



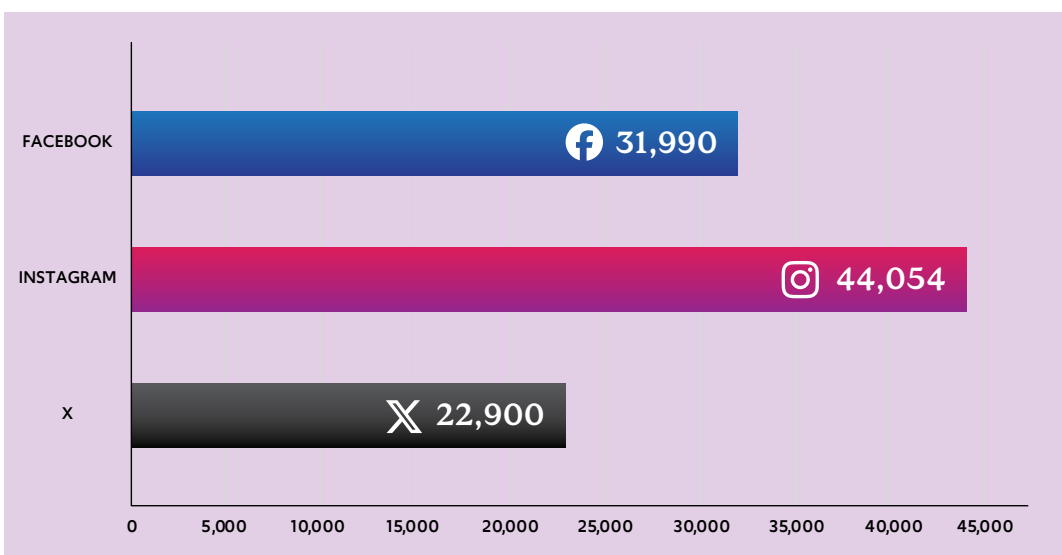
**4.85K**

**PATRONS**  
attended jobs,  
finance and small  
business programs

**1.19K**

**PATRONS**  
attended  
ESL programs

# Total Social Media Followers



**1.55M**

**SOCIAL MEDIA  
ENGAGEMENT**  
across platforms  
(Instagram,  
Facebook, X)



# Number of Hires by Division

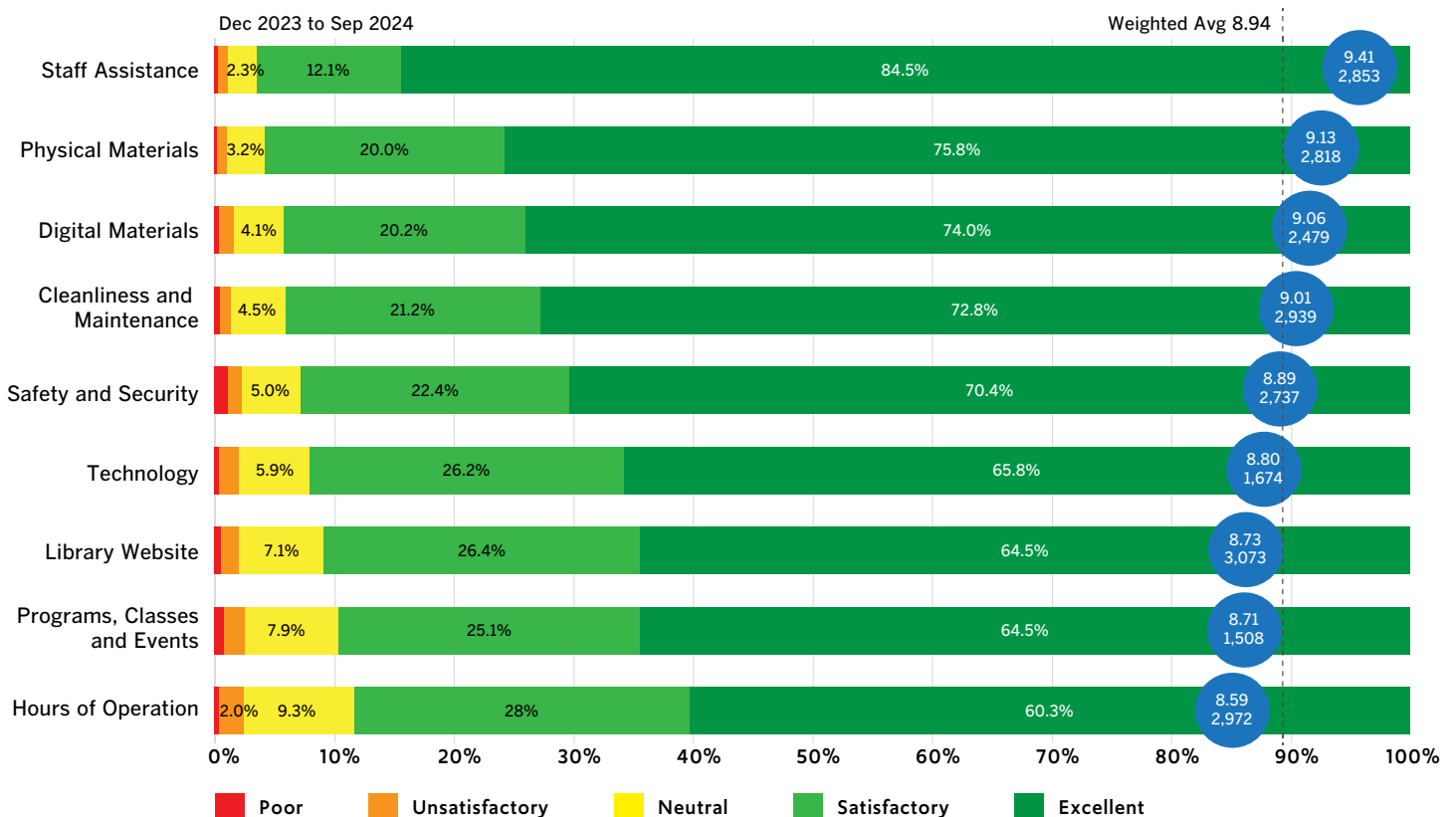
Main Library	32
Branch Division	86
Community Programs & Partnerships	16
Collections & Technical Services	4
Facilities	23
Finance	1
Human Resources	3
Information & Technology	5
Research, Strategy & Analytics	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>172</b>



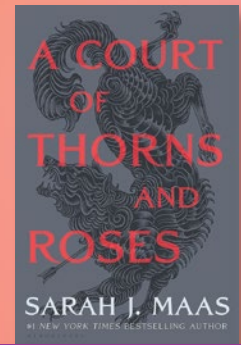
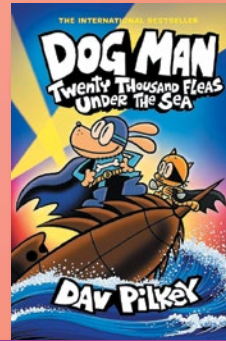
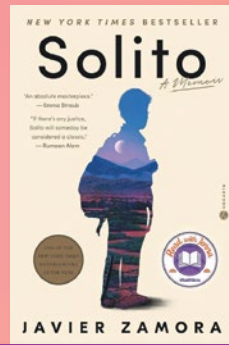
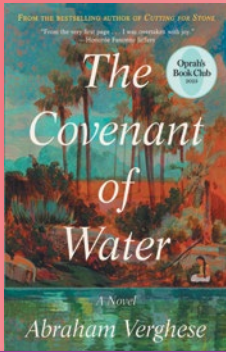
# Service Excellence

The Library continues to meet its high standards for service excellence. Patrons rate SFPL services an average of 9/10.

## SATISFACTION WITH SFPL SERVICES



# Top 5 Circulating Titles



## ADULT FICTION

- Abraham Verghese, *The Covenant of Water*
- Bonnie Garmus, *Lessons in Chemistry*
- Ann Patchett, *Tom Lake*
- Gabrielle Zevin, *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*
- R.F. Kuang, *Yellowface*

## ADULT NONFICTION

- Javier Zamora, *Solito: A Memoir*
- Matthew Desmond, *Poverty, by America*
- Michelle Zauner, *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir*
- David Grann, *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder*
- T. Kira Madden, *Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls: A Memoir*

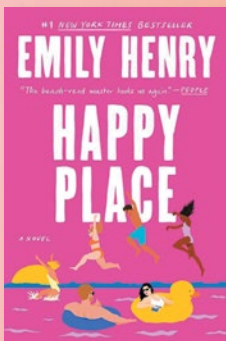
## JUVENILE FICTION

- Dog Man: Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea*
- Dog Man Unleashed*
- Cat Kid Comic Club: Perspectives*
- Dog Man: Brawl of the Wild*
- A Tale of Two Kitties*

DAV PILKEY'S TITLES SWEEP THE TOP 5 SPOTS!

## TEEN FICTION

- Sarah J. Maas, *A Court of Thorns and Roses*
- Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*
- Jenny Han, *The Summer I Turned Pretty*
- Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire*
- Holly Jackson, *The Good Girl's Guide to Murder*



## FICTION EBOOKS

- Emily Henry, *Happy Place*
- Rebecca Yarros, *Fourth Wing*
- Barbara Kingsolver, *Demon Copperhead*
- Ann Patchett, *Tom Lake*
- Abraham Verghese, *The Covenant of Water*

## NONFICTION EBOOKS

- Lori Gottlieb, *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone: A Therapist, HER Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed*
- Jennette McCurdy, *I'm Glad My Mom Died*
- Bill Gifford and Peter Attia, *Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity*
- Britney Spears, *The Woman in Me*
- David Grann, *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder*

## MOVIES

- Oppenheimer*
- Barbie*
- Avatar: The Way of Water*
- John Wick, Chapter 4*
- Guardians of the Galaxy, Vol. 3*

## MUSIC

- Taylor Swift, *Midnights*
- Taylor Swift, *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)*
- Taylor Swift, *Lover*
- Stevie Wonder, *Hackney Diamonds*
- Olivia Rodrigo, *Guts*



# Public Programs

## YOUTH

**8,566**

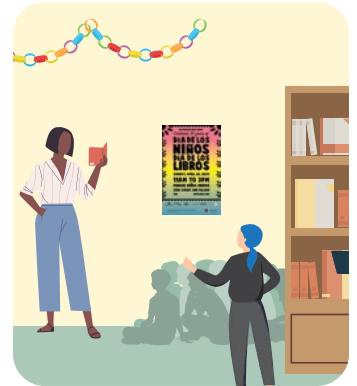
YOUTH  
PROGRAMS

**238K**

ATTENDANCE

**42%**

INCREASE  
in youth  
programs from  
previous year



**3,751**

STORYTIME  
PROGRAMS

**133.4K**

ATTENDANCE

**70%**

INCREASE  
in storytime  
programs from  
previous year



## ADULT

**4,640**

ADULT  
PROGRAMS

**126.8K**

ATTENDANCE

**56%**

INCREASE  
in adult  
programs from  
previous year



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

## Project Read Turns 40

In December 2023, SFPL announced the 40th anniversary of its esteemed adult literacy program, Project Read. In San Francisco, it is estimated that 80,000 adults—one in every five—have some difficulty with basic reading and writing. Since its establishment in 1983, Project Read has been a beacon of hope for more than 7,000 adult learners in the local community, transforming lives through improved reading and writing skills. Project Read revolutionized the field of adult literacy by developing a motivational program that empowers learners to set personal goals based on their own interests and reading aspirations.

The dedication of Project Read’s volunteers shone brightly as they generously contributed more than 1,300 hours of time annually. A recent \$315,000 bequest from former tutor Richard Kreisman has further fortified Project Read’s mission. This generous contribution will ensure the program’s continued success in promoting literacy for years to come.







# Banned Books Week

During Banned Books Week, October 1–7, 2023, the Library stepped into the national debate with a series of public programs and displays designed to raise awareness about the ongoing challenges to intellectual freedom. The Library hosted PEN America’s Freedom to Read Student Summit on September 30, featuring a day of thematic workshops and activities designed to give high school students the knowledge and skills necessary to combat book banning and educational censorship, to preserve the freedoms to read and learn in their schools, libraries and communities across the region and beyond. On October 7, the Library and Litquake hosted a panel of children’s and YA authors who discussed writing from the perspective of a creator whose work has been banned or censored. In addition, the Library held a series of banned-book reading groups and letter-writing sessions, where participants could send a note to authors of banned books expressing how their work impacted their lives.

And when the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers headed to the Superbowl in February, the two cities’ library systems teamed up on a Tackle Censorship campaign celebrating the freedom to read. Kansas City Public Library and San Francisco Public Library made a friendly wager on the performance of their city’s teams: A library representative in the city whose team lost the Super Bowl would sport the winning city’s gear and read a banned book in a recording that would be shared on social media. Ultimately, upon the 49ers’ 25–22 loss to the Chiefs, City Librarian Michael Lambert graciously read *Sofia Valdez, Future Prez*, by Andrea Beaty.



# Summer Stride

Summer Stride continued strong in 2024, boasting a whopping 27 million minutes of library participation in total by SFPL patrons, 782 public events from June to August, 349 class visits with 6,160 youth and 49 outreach events. This year's artist was Sindy Santamaria, a local artist whose beautifully bright illustrations illuminated the foggy City all summer long.

**Patron comment:** *“When I was 7 years old, I was so excited to be a part of a summer reading program at the original Ingleside Branch. I am now 67, and am participating in Summer Stride. Thank you, SFPL, for 6 decades of learning, exploration, education, and wonder!!!”*







**18.3K**

**SUMMER  
STRIDE  
FINISHERS**

**14%**

**INCREASE  
IN FINISHERS  
from last year**

**\$2.6M**

**BOOK GIVEAWAY  
BUDGET  
for the community**







# Bay Beats

Bay Beats, a free music streaming platform offered by SFPL, went live on Saturday, October 28, 2023. After a hugely successful open call for submissions, albums from more than 150 top-rated solo musicians and bands from popular genres—jazz to soul, rap to rock, classical to world—were available for anyone to listen to, with or without a library card.

To celebrate the big news, SFPL threw a launch party featuring six Bay Beats artists and bands in October. And throughout the rest of the year, a vibrant programming series—including Atrium Tunes at Noon, soothing tunes played in the Main Library’s Atrium; Rock the Koret featuring Dizzy Twin and Surplus 180; and live performances at branch libraries—literally brought music to everyone’s ears. Additionally, Bay Beats curated a Battle of the Bands performance at SFMOMA to celebrate the opening of their exhibition *Art of Noise* in spring 2024.



Photos on this page by Kit Castagne





Photos on this page by Myleen Hollero







# Pride in Panels, Pride Month, Queer Black Archive Project

SFPL lived up to its title as “Queerest.Library.Ever.” through a series of innovative new programs for the LGBTQIA+ community. In January, the Hormel LGBTQIA+ Center and the San Francisco History Center (SFHC) invited all members of the Queer Black community, as well as allies and supporters, to participate in the launch of the Queer Black Community Archives Project. The two-part program was aimed at empowering the local Queer Black community to preserve their invaluable archives.

On February 18, the Hormel Center hosted Pride in Panels: SF Queer Comics Festival, a premiere inaugural showcase of San Francisco Bay Area LGBTQIA+ comics creators. Featuring wide-ranging panels, maker workshops and an exhibition hall with queer comics creators selling and signing their work, the Library teamed up with California College of the Arts’ MFA Comics Program to celebrate the remarkable vitality of the San Francisco Bay Area (and beyond!) Queer comics scene.

In June, SFPL hosted dozens of free Pride programs for all ages. On June 9, in conjunction with the *Authentic Selves* photo exhibit, the Hormel Center hosted a discussion with contributors to the book, *Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families*. Therese Rodriguez, pioneer Filipino immigrant and human rights activist, presented her new collection of poetry on June 13, and on that same day, Kim Shuck’s Poem Jam honored the multicultural lesbian literary and art journal *Sinister Wisdom*. Other family programs included Pride-themed storytimes, rainbow cookie decorating and more. For teens, the Library provided Queer and Trans Social Hours and a graphic novel book club.



## I Love Tenderloin

In celebration of I Love Tenderloin Week (April 21–27), a fun and engaging week of community building in the Tenderloin neighborhood, the Main Library both threw open its doors to welcomed neighbors in and coordinated a neighborhood walking tour to showcase and support vibrant local businesses just blocks away. The action began on Tuesday, April 23, with a Tenderloin Small Business Boogie walking tour, joined by Mayor London Breed and our own City Librarian. Participants visited the Tenderloin Museum, the Phoenix Hotel, Outta Sight Pizza and Shovels Bar. And on Saturday, April 27, the Main Library hosted its inaugural Tenderloin Branch Open House, featuring a resource fair with community partners, an Arabic Story Hour followed by arts and crafts and a streaming music listening party at The Bridge at Main literacy and learning center. A photography exhibit of portraits of people in the Tenderloin community, “We Heart Tenderloin” by Judy Iranyi, was also installed at the Fulton and Larkin Street entrances at the Main Library.



# Night of Ideas

**San Francisco's biggest bash was back and better than ever.**

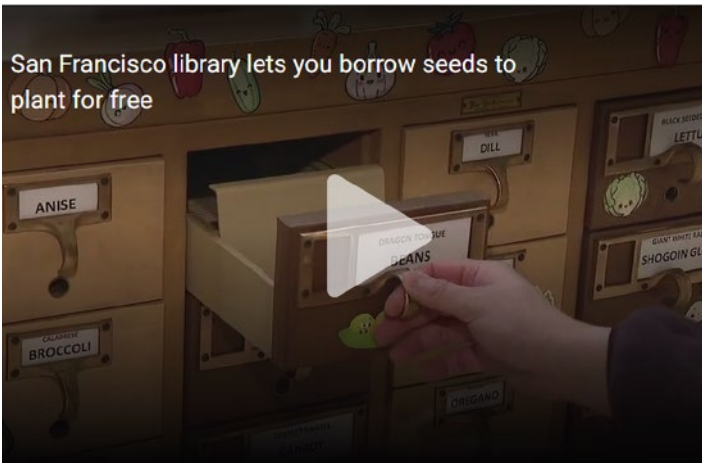
Villa Albertine, San Francisco Public Library, KQED and Circuit Network hosted the 2024 Night of Ideas on March 2, from 4 p.m. to 1 a.m., on all seven floors of the Main Library. Philosophical debates, talks, performances, screenings and more encouraged attendees to engage together around the pressing issues of our day while also celebrating the City's vibrant culture and heritage. New this year was the very first Afternoon of Ideas, a family program ahead of the main event welcoming younger generations to participate in crafts, performances and workshops with award-winning children's book authors, artists and educators. This year's theme, "Fault Lines: Outside the Lines," was the jumping-off point for presenters and participants to engage with the points of rupture and connection within urban life. In addition to the heady topics, there was plenty of levity with stand-up, improv, drag, cabaret, zine-making and a lounge and late-night dance party with DJ Beatific and Giants' Resident DJ Umani, hosted by Friends of the San Francisco Public Library and Value Culture.

Photos courtesy of KQED photographers: Estefany Gonzalez, Vita Hewitt and Alain McLaughlin









San Francisco library lets you borrow seeds to plant for free

# Financial Capability Month

APRIL 2024



**Boost your finances and prepare for the future with FREE virtual and in-person workshops on:**


- Saving for retirement and estate planning
- Investing in stocks
- Avoiding scams and identity theft
- Managing cash flow and spending habits, and much more!

All programs are live-streamed. See website for dates and times.

**Get personalized help:**

- One-on-one counseling on budgeting basics with Smart Money Coaching
- \*Meet with a Certified Financial Planner™ to create a financial plan with Advisers Give Back

\* Only certain income levels are eligible. See website for details.



**REGISTER TODAY!**



[on.sfppl.org/fcm24](https://on.sfppl.org/fcm24)

For questions about the program or help registering, contact [sfpplcpp@sfppl.org](mailto:sfpplcpp@sfppl.org). For accommodations (such as ASL or language interpretation), call (415) 557-4400 or contact [accessibility@sfppl.org](mailto:accessibility@sfppl.org). Requesting at least 3 business days in advance will help ensure availability. All SFPL locations are wheelchair accessible.

# Seed Lending Library at Bayview

In March, SFPL piloted a new seed lending library at its Bayview Branch. Anyone with or without a library card who was enthusiastic to try their hand at gardening had the opportunity to stop by the branch, pick up free seeds and start their own vegetable or herb gardens.

# National Financial Capability Month

April is National Financial Capability Month, and once more SFPL stepped up to offer free programs to support patrons' financial success and future goals. Throughout the month, the Library hosted 15 programs on a wide menu of topics, ranging from the basics on saving, financial planning and cash flow management, to investing, retirement planning and insurance sub-limits. Attendance was up this year, with a total of 1,214 patrons benefiting from the Library's offerings.

**Patron comment:** *"I feel confident and hopeful that my situation will get better very soon! [My Smart Money Coach's] thoughtfulness, care, expertise and attentiveness makes a world of difference, as I navigate the complexities of managing my financial responsibilities."*





**Cinematic  
SAN FRANCISCO**

**STARRING  
Jim  
VAN BUSKIRK**  
HISTORIAN, LUMINARY  
AND CO-AUTHOR OF

CELLULOID SAN FRANCISCO:  
THE FILM LOVER'S GUIDE TO  
BAY AREA MOVIE LOCATIONS

**JIM VAN BUSKIRK EXPLORES  
SAN FRANCISCO ON THE BIG SCREEN**  
Jim Van Buskirk hosts a four-part series celebrating San Francisco's important role in the movies. These lively clip-filled programs are engaging, entertaining and educational. Beginning with a general overview of Bay Area in films and television, narrowing the focus to representations of the 1906 Earthquake & Fire, before traversing the Golden Gate Bridge, and finally landing on Alcatraz.

**JOIN US EVERY TUESDAY EVENING IN JUNE  
MAIN LIBRARY, KORET AUDITORIUM, 6-7:30 P.M.**

**JUNE 4** "San Francisco on the Silver Screen"  
**JUNE 11** "Hollywood Shakes San Francisco"  
**JUNE 18** "The Golden Gate Bridge on the Silver Screen"  
**JUNE 25** "Alcatraz on the Silver Screen"

TENNERBOHN MUSEUM    Shaping San Francisco shapingsf.org • foundsf.org    **ROXIE**    San Francisco Public Library

## Lawyers in the Library Returns

This year, the San Francisco Pathways to Citizenship Initiative (SF Pathways) relaunched Lawyers in the Library, a series of free workshops to help eligible green card holders apply for U.S. citizenship at San Francisco Public Library. On Tuesday, January 16, the Lawyers in the Library workshop helped 30 eligible immigrants with their citizenship applications using the online tool CitizenshipWorks.

## Genealogy Conference

SFPL announced its first-ever all-day Genealogical and Family History Research Conference, which took place on May 22 at the Main Library. This event was tailored for both beginners and novice researchers, offering a unique opportunity to delve into the rich tapestry of their family's history with a diverse lineup of expert speakers.

## Cinematic San Francisco

This June, San Francisco took its star turn on the celluloid screen with the event series Cinematic San Francisco, hosted by Jim Van Buskirk in the Koret Auditorium. Van Buskirk, historian, luminary and co-author of *Celluloid San Francisco: The Film Lover's Guide to Bay Area Movie Locations*, invited film fans to discover and appreciate historic footage captured in beloved—as well as forgotten—films.





## One City One Book: *The Chinese Groove*

This spring, the Library was honored to announce its 18th One City One Book selection, *The Chinese Groove*, by local author Kathryn Ma. *The Chinese Groove* follows the journey of 18-year-old Shelley, who leaves his home in China's Yunnan Province to seek a brighter future in the United States. Encountering familial fractures and unmet expectations upon his arrival, Shelley navigates the complexities of immigrant life in present-day San Francisco. In addition to a number of exciting One City One Book programs and book clubs, SFPL hosted a standing-room-only headliner event on May 4 with Kathryn Ma and fellow author Natalie Baszile, who held the crowd in thrall with their lively and insightful conversation.

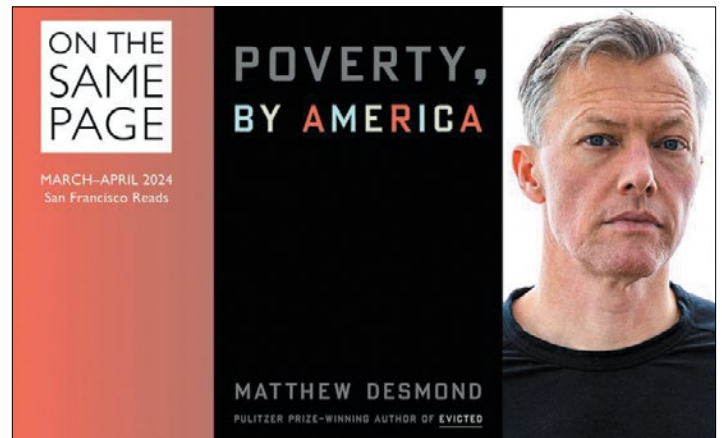






# BIPOC KidLit Fest

On April 6, families and kidlit fans across the Bay Area were invited to an exciting day showcasing diverse children’s book writers. Authors Natasha Tripplett, Aida Salazar, Lisa Moore Ramee and more spoke at SFPL’s first-ever BIPOC KidLit Fest. Christina Soontornvat, three-time Newbery Honor recipient and bestselling author, was this year’s Effie Lee Morris Lecture (ELM) keynote speaker.



# Poverty, by America at City Arts & Lectures

In March, the Library had the honor of hosting hundreds of library users to hear Pulitzer Prize-winning author Matthew Desmond for a free event at City Arts & Lectures to explore his latest book, *Poverty, By America*, the On the Same Page selection for spring. Desmond’s book examines entrenched poverty through underfunding in education, mass transit and healthcare, resulting in private opulence and public squalor. Advocating for the elimination of residential segregation, Desmond issues a poignant call for comprehensive antipoverty reforms, urging readers to confront their role in perpetuating poverty.

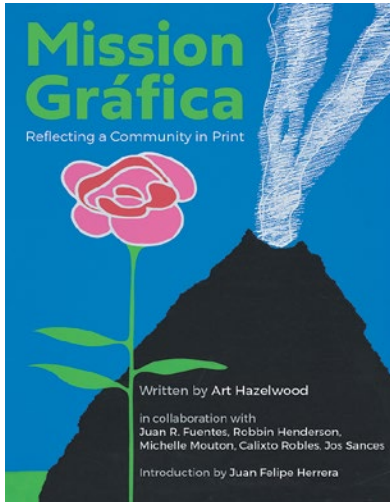
**Attendee comment:** *“I grew up in poverty but have been able to mask over it well enough to enmesh myself with more well-off folks; and I often hear some of the wildest ideas about the causes of poverty! It was refreshing to hear such a nuanced take on the ways upper classes contribute to poverty in America. Thank you for allowing an opportunity for many of the people in the audience to learn a way they can help stop that cycle before it begins.”*



# A LOCUS FOR THE ARTS

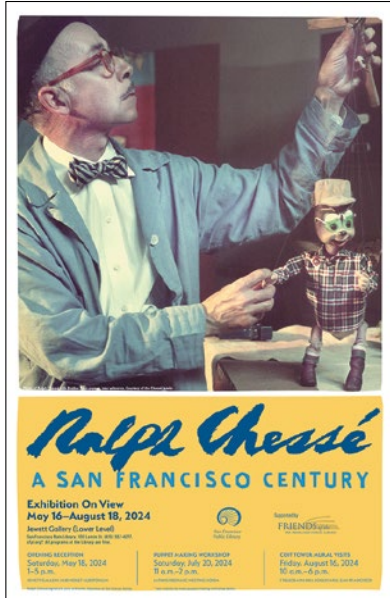
The Library as a local arts hub and destination

## Exhibits: *Toward a Black Aesthetic*, *Ralph Chessé* and *Mission Gráfica*



In 1982, a chance meeting in the Mission District by two exiles, Chilean artist René Castro and Boston-born Jos Sances, led to the birth of the community print center Mission Gráfica. In the intervening decades, the prolific and artistically independent non-profit, based out of the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, has produced striking posters that celebrate culture and urge action and attention to our most pressing political and human rights struggles. On view at San Francisco's Main Library, August 26–December 17, 2023, *Mission Gráfica: Reflecting a Community in Print* featured artworks spanning the organization's most fertile period, 1982–2006, by significant artists whose works reflect a wide range of styles and themes.

The Library announced the opening of a captivating exhibition on January 25, 2024, *Toward a Black Aesthetic: Kenneth P. Green Sr.'s Photographs of the 1960s and 70s*. Green, a lifelong Bay Area resident and the first Black staff photographer for the *Oakland Tribune* (1968–1982), played a pivotal role in documenting the significant social changes of that era. Lovingly co-curated by Green's son, Kenneth P. Green, Jr., *Toward a Black Aesthetic* featured a large selection of works that have never been exhibited publicly.



On May 16, 2024, the Library hosted the world premiere of *Ralph Chessé: A San Francisco Century*, including never-before-seen artworks and puppets from the beloved children's television show *Brother Buzz*. One of the Library's most ambitious exhibitions yet, *A San Francisco Century* featured the works of Chessé (1900–1991), a true Renaissance man. He engaged in a remarkable range of art, including painting, sculpture, murals, printmaking and, notably, puppets. Chessé was an actor and puppeteer who performed throughout the Bay Area, developing *Brother Buzz* in the early 1950s. San Francisco Public Library partnered with curator Glen Helfand and the Chessé family to reveal the untold story of a pioneering artist of color's deep connection to San Francisco through a diverse range of artwork, puppets, photographs and artifacts.







# Artists-in-Residence projects: *we were here*, *THE MAIN*° and *The Ink of Identity: Rereading Afghanistan*



The Library's inaugural Artists-in-Residence, established through a partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission, blossomed this year. Emmy-nominated, San Francisco-based filmmaker James Q. Chan, who was selected as an artist-in-residence in 2022, celebrated his world premiere of *THE MAIN*° on October 19. *THE MAIN*°, a virtual 360-degree series about SFPL, is the culmination of Chan's residency experience and explores the Library's role as a community hub and cultural center through the perspective of Library staff and patrons.



On December 21, artist-in-residence, writer and educator tanea lunsford lynx's landmark project *we were here* debuted in the Main Library's African American Center. This creative investigation explored the Black American presence in San Francisco during the late 1800s and early 1900s, with a particular focus on the 1906 earthquake. *we were here* wove history, poetry and lynx's own reflections on the 1906 earthquake as a metaphor for gentrification and displacement. The exhibit also showcased a range of available sources at the Library, including oral history audio clips, printed transcripts and archival photos of the City in the aftermath of the earthquake.



Lastly, on view November 9 through January 7, 2024, local artist Gazelle Samizay premiered a captivating new three-channel video and multimedia installation. Called *The Ink of Identity: Rereading Afghanistan*, Samizay's project was a thought-provoking installation that aimed to challenge prevailing narratives surrounding Afghanistan and shed light on the complexities of Afghan identity.

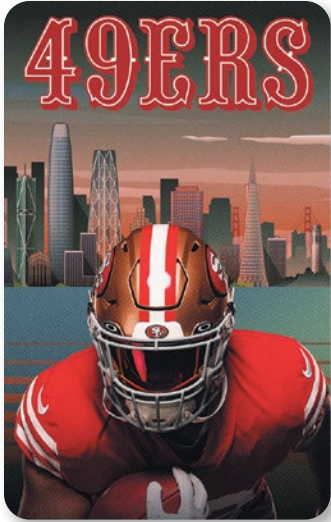
## Book Stop Arrives in Hunters Point



On September 14, 2023, the Library hosted a ribbon cutting celebration for its second SFPL Book Stop, located in the Hunters View community resident lounge. Bayview children's librarians held a storytime for families, and SFPL's Collections and Technical Services staff hosted an outreach table with giveaways.



# New Library Cards



San Francisco 49ers library card, launched September 2023

SF Giants library card, launched August 2023

Wild Parrots library card, launched August 2023

# Racial Equity Work at the Library



Under the leadership of Naomi Jelks, SFPL's Racial Equity Manager, and Maria Mastrokyriakos, SFPL's HR DEI lead, and with the dedication and work of the Racial Equity Committee (REC), the Library took steps forward in its Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) this year. One goal was in the area of hiring and recruitment. The Library aimed to diversify its workforce through targeted outreach, building and leveraging partnerships and developing pipelines to Library careers. The REC created a working group comprised of subject matter experts to identify recruitment outlets and outreach opportunities;

to recommend actions to develop and leverage partnerships (new and existing); and to develop pipelines to Library careers.

Secondly, in order to create more diverse and equitable leadership and management, Library HR and REC collaborated to develop a new requirement for each manager and employee to complete a DEI learning opportunity, built into staff annual Performance Plans and Appraisal Reports. DEI offerings include cross-cultural communications, managing implicit bias and dealing with workplace bullying.

A third goal was to build an organizational culture of inclusion and belonging by growing Library affinity groups. Three affinity groups—BIPOC, SFPL Black staff and LGBTQIA+—were established to have their own safe spaces to discuss issues of identity, oppression, action and change. These spaces created support and community to share common experiences and ideas for healing.



# Branch Open Houses and Outreach: Bringing Communities Together









# La futura Biblioteca de la Misión

## Your Future Mission Branch Library



Biblioteca Pública  
de San Francisco

[sfpl.org](https://www.sfpl.org)

Visite nuestra ubicación temporal  
en la calle 1234 Valencia Street.  
¡Abrimos los 7 días de la semana!

Visit our temporary location  
at 1234 Valencia Street.  
We're open 7 days a week!

Images Courtesy of San Francisco Public Works - Bureau of Architecture

## Capital Project Update

On August 29, 2023, Mayor London N. Breed, Supervisor Hillary Ronen, SFPL and Public Works (DPW) announced the start of construction on the \$34 million Mission Branch Library renovation. Funded through the Library Preservation Fund and a \$5.3 million grant from the California State Library Building Forward initiative, the renovation is designed to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certified, in alignment with San Francisco's Climate Action Plan goals to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

In collaboration with the community, the Library and architects from DPW developed a renovation plan that focused on making the historic building energy efficient, seismically safe and resilient to extreme weather and air quality events. Per the City's electrification ordinance, the renovation eliminates the need for natural gas appliances and heating. Instead, the building will draw power from a new rooftop solar system and the City's municipal hydroelectric resources. The renovated branch, located at 300 Bartlett Street, will feature a new HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system with MERV 13 air filtration and air conditioning to provide respite during heat and air quality events.

In August 2023, the Library held three community meetings to provide updates on the Chinatown Branch renovation. Our partners at Public Works presented the exciting new amenities, such as an enlarged community room, a new teen room, a new elevator and internal stairway connecting all levels and a roof terrace. Additionally, the San Francisco Arts Commission discussed new art to be mounted onto the arched niches in the branch's historic reading room.

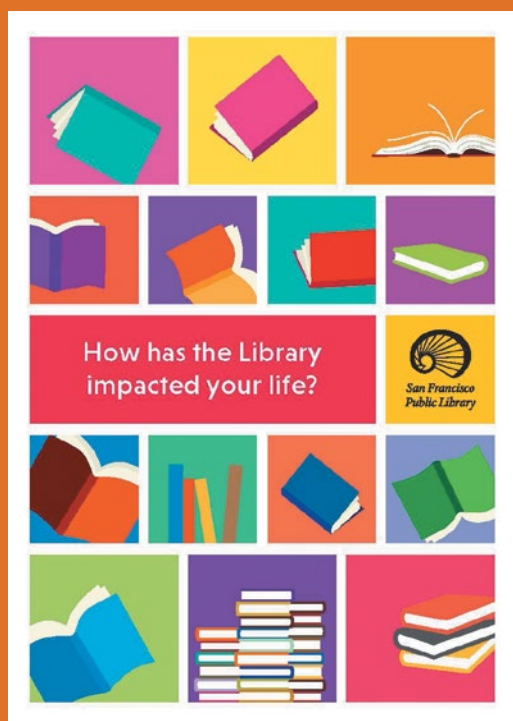
In May 2024, SFPL hosted three community engagement meetings in the Ocean View neighborhood. After an update on the budget and timeline of the new Ocean View Branch Library, attendees brainstormed what made them proud of their community, their aspirations for the new library and how the library could meet future needs. Residents spoke about how their neighborhood was friendly and stayed connected through longtime residents and multi-generational families. They envisioned a future library that would be a community hub with many amenities, someplace safe, inviting and vibrant—a space that reflects the people who live there.

Thank you to John Cunha, SFPL's Director of Facilities, and Lisa Valerio, Capital Projects Manager, for their stewardship of these important capital projects.



# Final Words from Our Beloved Patrons

*“I love libraries. They were my heaven growing up with a difficult family. I learned about life and the world through books. As a student I used the computer. During Covid it allowed me to read and be comforted. As a preschool teacher I get books for my students. Libraries have saved me lots of money. Libraries are my favorite place in the world. Thank you.”*



*“The library is a grand living room  
With books for one and all—  
From the very tall to the very small—  
All are like a family, for all to see.  
A new friend I made today  
Is a poetry book—with pictures at  
which to look.  
The books are of a diversity  
From riddles and jokes to mystery.  
I think that I shall never see  
A building as lovely as my library.”*

*“I have been coming to the Main Library over 16 years and I use the library for usual things, book, movies, print. I love the library, it’s like a university of knowledge and a place for everyone. It’s needed and I love it.”*



# Vision 2030



## Vision

A democratic, equitable and vibrant San Francisco for everyone

## Mission

Connect our diverse communities to learning, opportunities and each other

## Values

- Well-being
- Community
- Equity
- Collaboration
- Exploration

## Strategic Priorities



### Literacy Champion

Cultivate the critical understanding necessary for meaningful participation in society through immersive and varied learning activities.



### Cultural Amplifier

Facilitate cultural experiences that celebrate and deepen understanding of the diverse communities of San Francisco.



### Community Catalyzer

Foster experiences both within and beyond the Library that create and strengthen social connections.



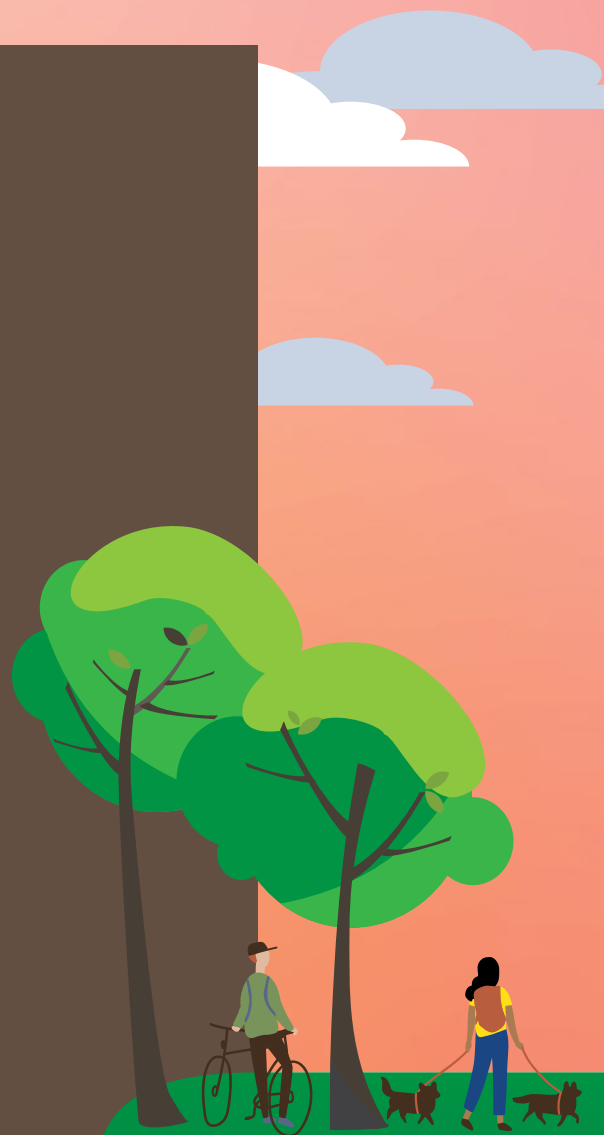
### Thoughtful Navigator

Serve as a caring and knowledgeable gateway, helping people find and use library, community and city resources to realize their goals.



### Resource Provider

Offer experiences, guidance and resources that support basic needs, encourage personal growth and enrich life in San Francisco.



San Francisco  
Public Library



Read Our New Strategic Plan  
[on.sfpl.org/strategicplan](https://on.sfpl.org/strategicplan)