



San Francisco Public Library

San Francisco Public Library



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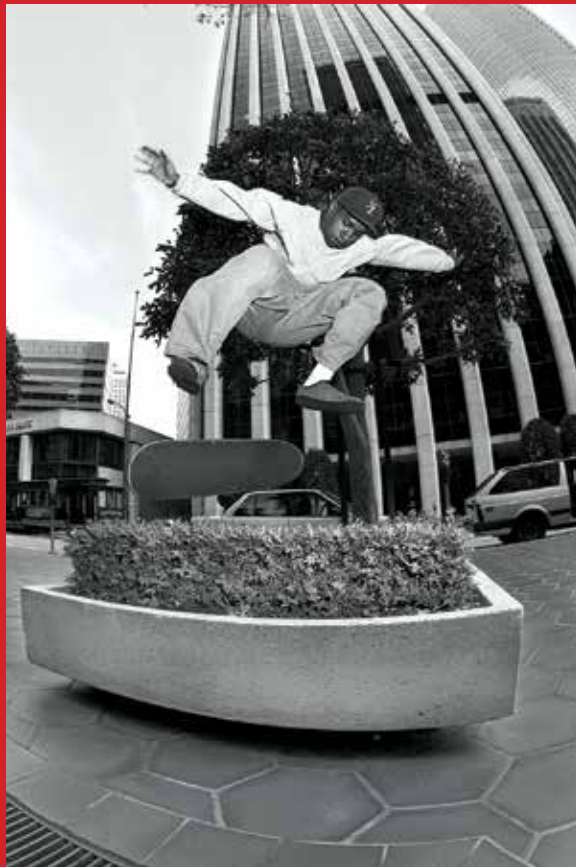
Annual Report FY 2024-2025



Jesse Van Roechoudt, backside kickflip, Japantown, 2002. Photo by Richard Hart.



James Kelch, ollie in Civic Center Parking Lot, 1990. Photo by Tobin Yelland.



Keenan Milton, skating Brown Marble, 1993. Photo by Sean Dolinsky.

Dear Readers,

I'm super stoked to share with you our 2024-25 Annual Report highlighting the ways that San Francisco Public Library continues to transform, whether it's through our thought-provoking exhibitions, our rich and robust collections, our cherished neighborhood libraries and, of course, through our direct engagement with the **4.32 million visitors** like you who walk through our doors every year. This year has been so rad!

Thanks to your voracious appetite for books and materials, our circulation continued to climb to its highest levels in history, reaching nearly 14.5 million checkouts. It's heartening to know that our robust collections budget is delivering a strong return on investment in meeting the needs of our community so well.

If library visits are a good barometer for our City's recovery, we are highly pleased to reach our highest foot traffic since 2019 thanks to all the loyal patrons who see our branches and Main Library as welcoming "third spaces" every day. We continue to move ahead with our capital projects too, showing significant progress in the ongoing historic renovation of the landmark Mission Branch Library. We look forward to welcoming all patrons there, when we reopen those doors next summer.

"Thanks to your voracious appetite for books and materials, our circulation continued to climb to its highest levels in history, reaching nearly 14.5 million checkouts."

Thanks to our hardworking, mission-driven staff, we continue to advance our **Vision 2030 Strategic Plan** with new services like the introduction of our Decodable Readers collections to ensure every child is reading at grade level by third grade, and our business and financial planning programs that help all library users envision a brighter future for themselves. Our outstanding array of programs offers something for everyone, and we are all so thankful for the support provided for these efforts by Friends & Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library.

I hope you take a moment to also enjoy this report for its retrospective on the past year's celebratory exhibition, *Skateboarding San Francisco: Concrete, Community, Continuity*, hosted this past spring at the Main Library. This exhibition was among the most popular in the Library's history, attracting more than 10,000 visitors to the Jewett Gallery. As a lifelong skateboarder myself, it reminded me why our incredible City is a worldwide mecca for innovation and creative expression for so many of our visitors.

Ripping (and reading) in style,

Michael Lambert

Michael Lambert, City Librarian

Cover: Ahmed AKA "Black Reign," Pat Washington, Big Bill, Mike Hernandez, Erfuah, Kareem Campbell and Geez at Bay Blocks, 1997. Photo by Tobin Yelland.

Back cover: Jeffrey Cheung, bluntslide in Bernal Heights, 2024. Photo by Norma Ibarra.

Leadership

Daniel Lurie Mayor	
COMMISSIONERS	
Connie Wolf President	2018–2026
Pete Huang Vice President	2018–2029
Jarie Bolander	2022–2026
Dr. Shawn P. Calhoun	2025–2029
Whitney Jones	2025–2029
Dr. Eurania Isabel López	2020–2026
Dr. Mary J. Lomax-Ghiraduzzi	2014–2026

Michael Lambert City Librarian	Michelle Jeffers Chief of Community Programs & Partnerships
Maureen Singleton Chief Operating Officer	Naomi Jelks Main Library Manager
Dolly Goyal Chief of Public Services	Randle McClure Chief Analytics Officer
Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor Chief of Branches	Lori Regler Library Human Resources Director
Shellie Cocking Chief of Collections & Technical Services	Margot Shaub Commission Affairs Analyst
John Cunha Director of Facilities	Jaime Wong Director of Communications
Mike Fernandez Chief Financial Officer	

John Cardiel, backside tailslide, Union Square, 1993.
Photo by Tobin Yelland.

Contents

1 Letter from the City Librarian

2 Library Leadership

4 A Year of the Arts

- *Skateboarding SF*
- Dr. Maya Angelou Monument
- Live Music Performances

8 SFPL Budget and Friends of SFPL Support

10 Circulation Data

11 In-Person Visits

12 Computers, Wi-Fi, Social Media and Hires by Division

13 Patron Satisfaction Survey

14 Peer Benchmarking Survey

16 Public Programs

17 Summer Stride 2025

18 Top 5 Circulating Titles

20 DELIVERING RESULTS ON VISION 2030

Literacy Champion

- Decodable Readers
- Comic Book Arts Fest
- Everybody’s Climate
- Financial Capability Month and Financial Planning Day
- Tech Week

22 Cultural Amplifier

- Poet Laureate
- Filipino American Book Festival
- Booked and Beautiful
- Shadows and Light
- Día de los Niños
- Pride at the Library

26 Community Catalyzer

- Night of Ideas
- One City One Book
- Branch Open Houses

28 Thoughtful Navigator

- You Are Home Immigration Resource Centers
- Small Business Strolls
- Tapped-In Magazine Exhibition

30 Resource Provider

- Read to Recovery
- Fix-It Clinics
- Preservation Dept. Program
- Staff Recognition and Milestones

32 Notable Recognitions

- Urban Libraries Council Innovation Award
- California Library Assoc. PRExcellence Award

34 Capital Project Updates

- Mission Branch
- Chinatown Branch



A Year of the Arts

A Blockbuster Exhibit: Skateboarding SF

San Francisco has long been a mecca for skateboarders, with the Embarcadero and other downtown spots serving as just a few must-visit destinations for skaters from around the globe. In February 2025, SFPL unveiled a landmark exhibit, *Skateboarding San Francisco: Concrete, Community, Continuity*, in the Jewett Gallery at the Main Library. Spanning 50 years—from 1975 to 2025—the exhibit celebrated the unique urban features that make the city so skateable, including its iconic concrete ledges and epic hills.

Artworks related to skateboarding, skate magazines, archival photographs, memorable skate videos and urban detritus from iconic skate spots like the Embarcadero Ribbon and Hubba Hideout were featured alongside interviews with world-renowned locals and legendary skateboarders. In addition, satellite displays showcasing urban culture from the Library's storied collections and work by local artists were installed throughout the Main: zines from the James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center and Small Book Arts Collection, issues of *Thrasher Magazine*, hand-lettered signs by Margaret Kilgallen, Karl Watson's picture book *My First Skateboard* and hand-painted skate decks by Felicia Gabaldon.

The exhibit was a huge success, drawing in crowds throughout the months that was open to the public, demonstrating the appetite that our local communities have for innovative, educational and timely exhibitions. *Skateboarding San Francisco* had the highest attendance in the Library's recorded history. Kit, the gallery's attendant, observed, "Having served as the gallery attendant for *Skateboarding San Francisco: Concrete, Community, Continuity*, I was able to experience firsthand the outstanding level of community enthusiasm, engagement, love and curiosity that this



exhibition sparked. *Skateboarding San Francisco* drew in a wide range of visitors: skaters and non-skaters, folks who grew up skating in the 80s and 90s and the newest vanguard of skate culture, SF locals and guests visiting the city (even some just to see the show!). I even had a fair share of repeat visitors, some even bringing friends upon each re-visit."



Kym Agresti Skating Fort Miley, late 1980s.
Photo by James Pistons.



Maite Steenhoudt skating Potrero skatepark, 2021.
Photo by Norma Ibarra.



Bonnie Blouin Skating the Banks at Black Point Battery, 1987. Photo by Kevin Thatcher.

sk8er girls

A Monumental Moment: Dr. Maya Angelou Monument Unveiling

It was truly a monumental fall season at the Main Library. In September 2024, the Library, together with the San Francisco Arts Commission, elected officials and family representatives of Dr. Maya Angelou unveiled a new monument titled *Portrait of a Phenomenal Woman: A Monument Honoring Dr. Maya Angelou* by artist Lava Thomas.

Portrait of a Phenomenal Woman is located at the entrance to the Main Library at 100 Larkin Street. Rising to a majestic height of nine feet, the monument is made of bronze, and set atop a deep basalt stone base. Styled in the form of a book, the front of the sculpture features a portrait of Dr. Angelou drawn by Thomas, based on an image still from a 1973 interview of Dr. Angelou in conversation with Bill Moyers. The monument also features the quote “Still I Rise” along the front base, and a secondary quote on the back:

“Information helps you to see that you’re not alone. That there’s somebody in Mississippi and somebody in Tokyo who all have wept, who’ve all longed and lost, who’ve all been happy. So the library helps you to see, not only that you are not alone, but that you’re not really any different from everyone else. There may be details that are different, but a human being is a human being.”

— Dr. Maya Angelou

In celebration of the installation, SFPL debuted a special edition library card featuring a portrait of Dr. Angelou drawn by Thomas and launched a One City One Book: SF Reads campaign featuring *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Dr. Angelou.



From top, clockwise: Gloria Stingily, Ramona Laughing Brook Webb, Dr. Gina Fromer, Shawna Sherman, Lava Thomas at Phenomenal Women event. Lava Thomas at *Phenomenal Woman* unveiling, photo credit: Fred Rowe Foto, Courtesy of the SF Arts Commission. Monument installation.



Live Music Performances Abound

The Library has also become known as a valued “third place” to local artists in order to convene members of the public to enjoy music together. A 12-minute piece of music composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, rediscovered in a library in Germany in early September 2024, had its West Coast premiere at San Francisco Public Library’s Golden Gate Valley Branch on Saturday, Sept. 28. “When news of this discovery hit the classical music world last week, we were all excited,” said Dan Flanagan, violinist and one of Saturday’s featured musicians. “I immediately thought of the SF Public Library and got in touch with the staff to schedule a performance as soon as possible.” Members of Solano Trio and Berkelium String Quartet joined together to perform this special concert.

The Library has been a proud host and partner to many storied City arts organizations over the past year, including its Civic Center neighbors the Asian Art Museum, the SF Opera and SF Symphony. In addition to co-hosting the 2025 Night of Ideas event at the Asian Art Museum, the Library hosted 13 chamber concerts with the SF Symphony throughout its locations, and six programs by the SF Opera, including an enlightening talk about *La Bohème* and a lecture about Black voices in American opera.

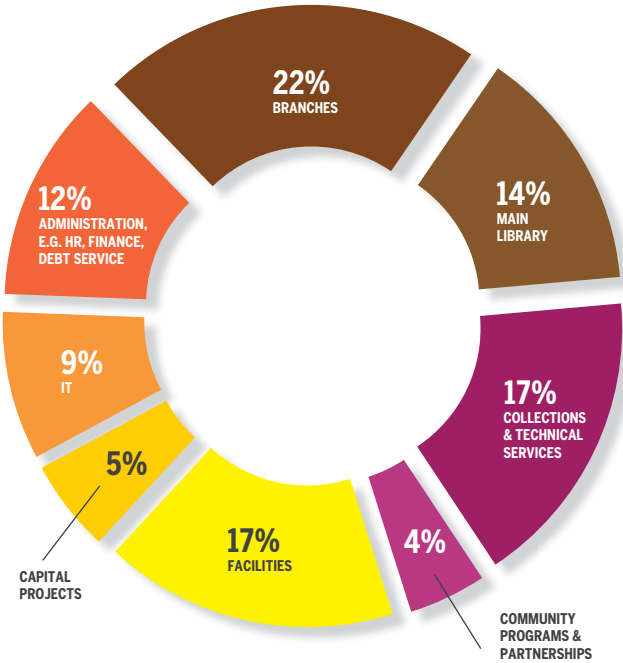
Clockwise from top: SF Symphony musicians Charles Chandler and Amos Yang; Jessie Fellows and Jonathan Vinocour; Katherine Siochi. Photos by Christopher M. Howard.



SFPL Budget

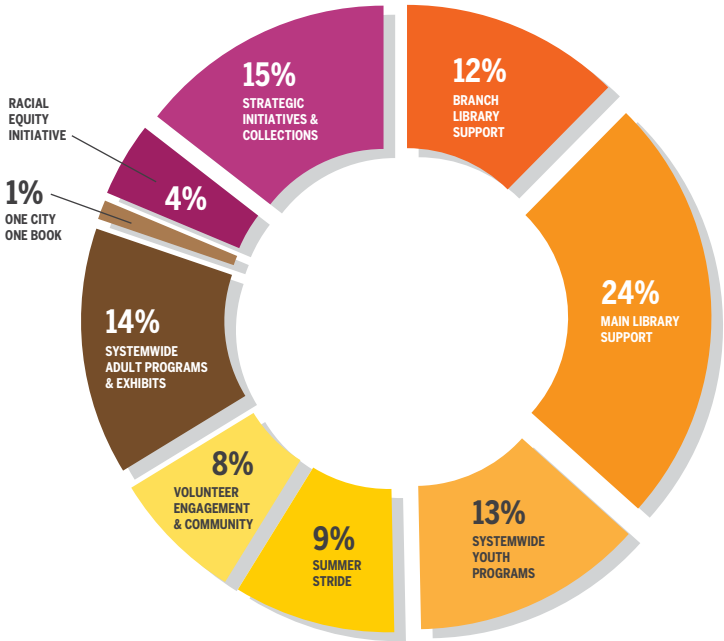
Total Expenditures: \$187.51M

USES BY DIVISIONS (BUDGET IN MILLIONS)	FY25
Branches	\$40.84
Main Library	\$26.31
Collections & Technical Services	\$32.06
Community Programs & Partnerships	\$8.31
Facilities	\$31.43
Capital Projects	\$9.87
IT	\$15.88
Administration, e.g. HR, Finance, Debt Service	\$22.81
Total	\$187.51



Friends of the SFPL Support

Total Grant Expenditures FY 2024–25: \$902,179



Branch Library Support	111,755
Main Library Support	218,804
Systemwide Youth Programs	117,663
Summer Stride	82,375
Volunteer Engagement and Community Outreach	67,268
Systemwide Adult Programs & Exhibits	125,969
One City One Book	9,790
Racial Equity Initiatives	37,818
Strategic Initiatives & Collections	130,737
Total Expenditure	\$902,179

- Friends of the San Francisco Public Library underwrites the Library's incredible array of public programs, including:
- Literary events, cultural programs, exhibitions, and branch events and activities, and cultural outreach ambassadors, including highlights such as Night of Ideas, One City One Book, the *Skateboarding San Francisco* exhibition and the *Phenomenal Woman* monument unveiling
 - Youth literacy and learning programs, such as Summer Stride, STEM classes and The Mix at the Main
 - Main Library programs at the History Center, affinity centers, The Bridge at Main and special collections
 - System-wide cultural heritage 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.

Circulation Data



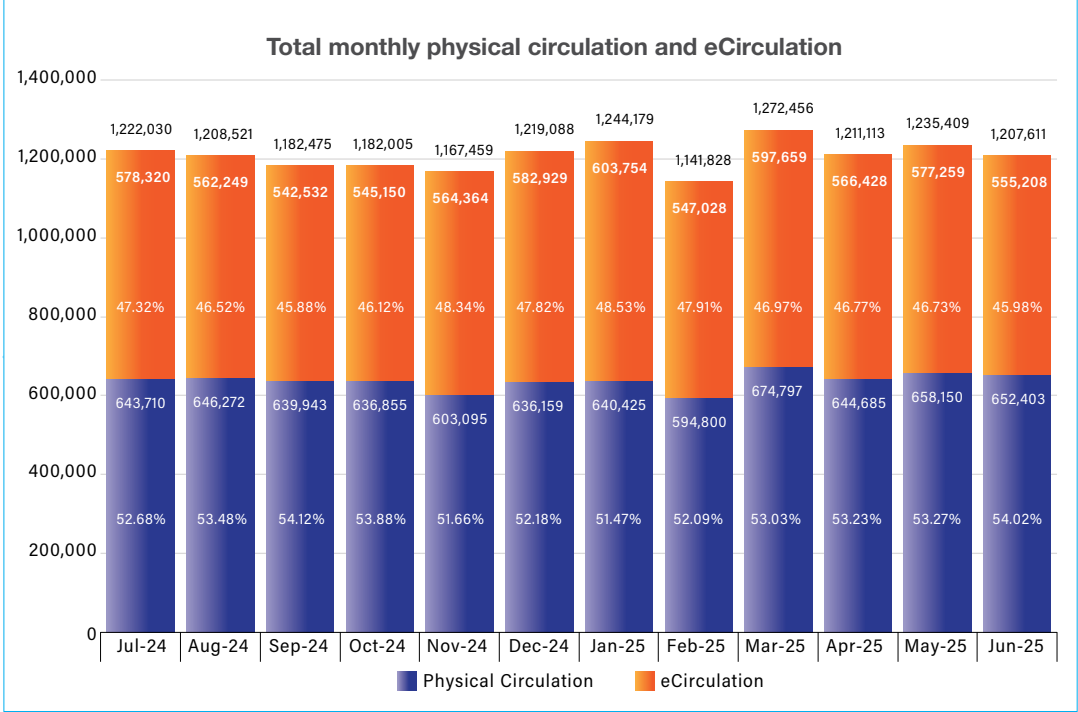
14,494,174
CIRCULATION
Up 3.2% over prior year



7,671,294
PHYSICAL
Up 1.8% over prior year



6,822,880
eCIRCULATION
Up 4.8% over prior year



SFPL set a new record for its circulation in FY24–25, for the third consecutive year!

411,263
PHYSICAL MATERIALS
added to the collection

67,900
PHYSICAL MATERIALS
added in languages other than English



569
PARK PASSES
in circulation to encourage visits to state parks

6K
TIMES PARK PASSES
were checked out

In-Person Visits



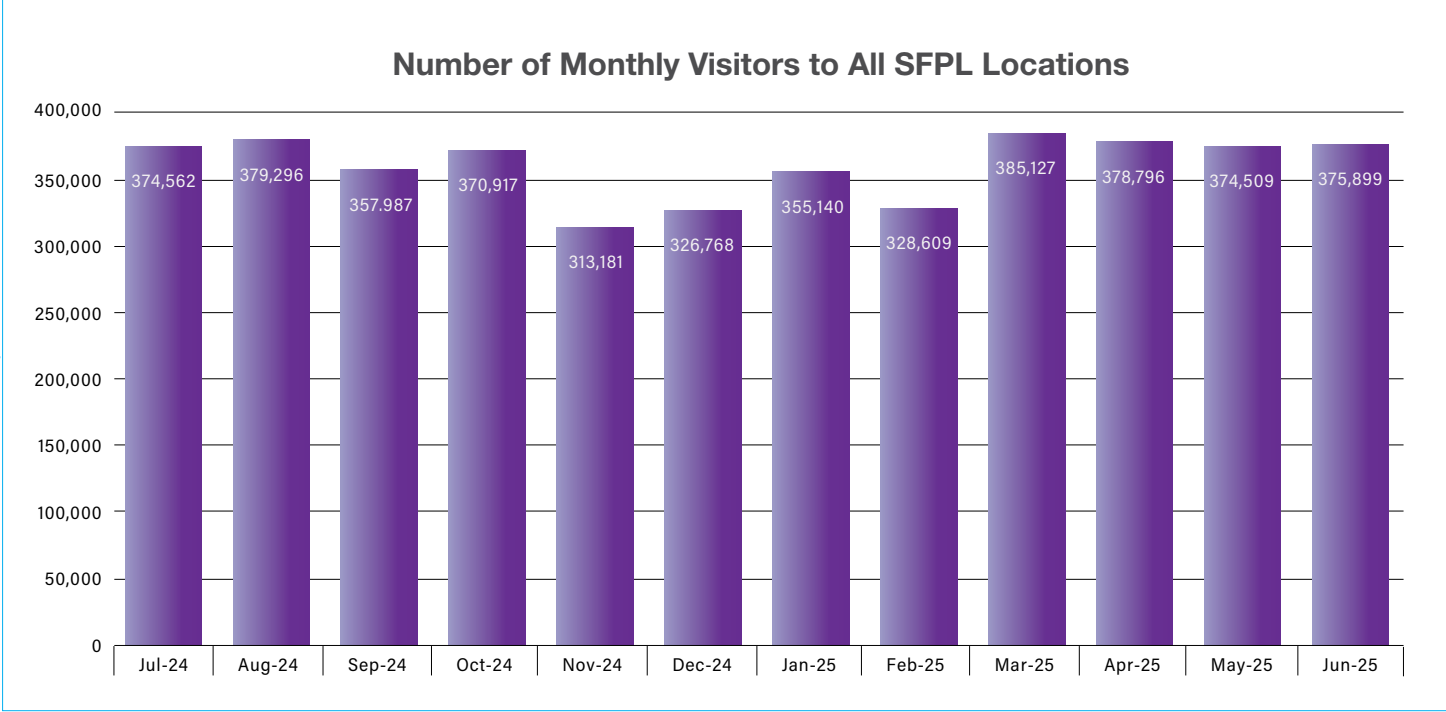
4,320,791
NUMBER OF VISITS
in FY24–25



OUR FOOT TRAFFIC INCREASED 4%
the highest number of visitors in our locations since 2019







797
MEETING ROOMS USED
by community groups

12.3K
PATRON CONTACTS
made by SFPL's Social Services Team

26,754
ONLINE QUESTIONS ANSWERED
remote patron support via email and chat

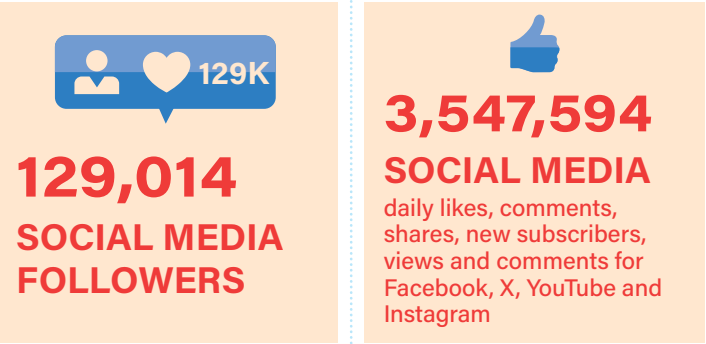
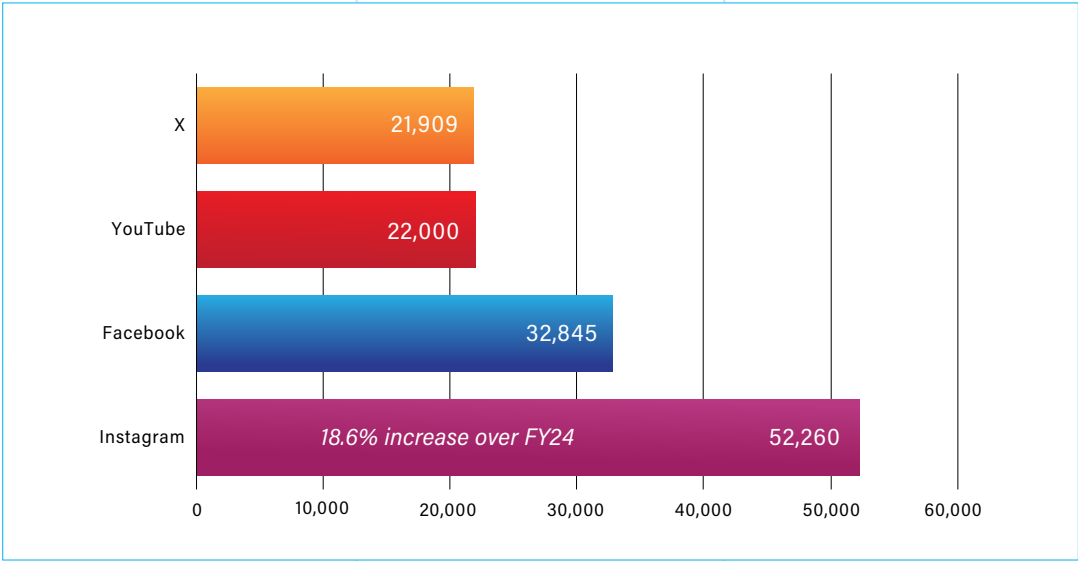
Computers and Wi-Fi



Hires by Division

DIVISION	
City Librarian's Office	1
Branch Division	55
Main Library	11
Community Programs and Partnerships	7
Collections & Technical Services	3
Facilities	29
Finance	1
Information Technology	8

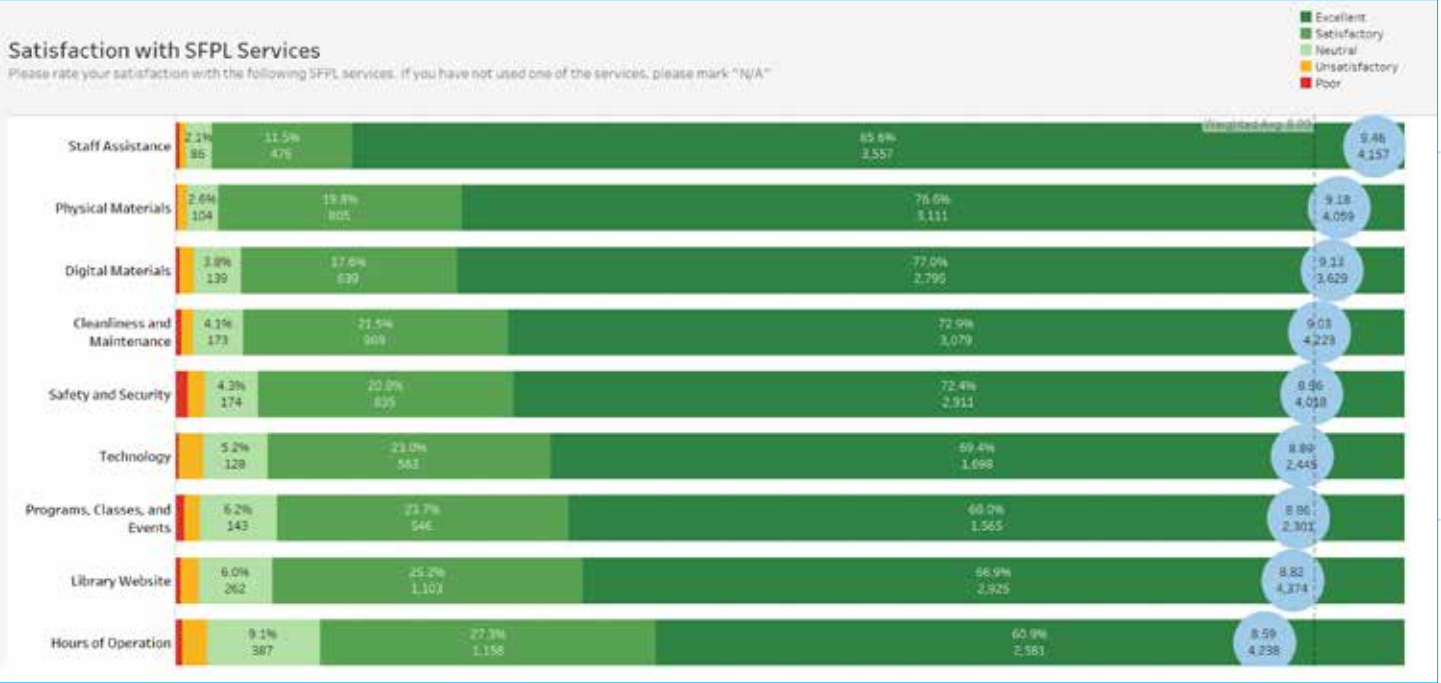
Total Social Media Followers



Patron Satisfaction Survey



In December 2023, the Library launched a Patron Satisfaction Survey to understand its areas of success and improvement. The survey is sent monthly via email to patrons who have used their library cards within the last 90 days and asks them to rate their satisfaction with key SFPL services from 1 to 10. Since its inception, SFPL's satisfaction scores have all increased or stayed steady—feedback that SFPL is reaching its standards for service excellence from its patrons.



Peer Benchmarking Survey

This year, SFPL launched a national peer benchmarking survey to gather key performance metrics, such as cardholders, visits and circulation per capita, and programs per 1,000 residents, from other leading urban libraries. We received 17 responses from peers, who were selected via a rigorous methodology that combined quantitative factors like population size and density with qualitative considerations such as regional significance and inclusion in previous city studies. Per capita calculations were determined based on libraries' reported service area populations. SFPL exceeded the average on all measures, most notably in visits per capita.



Samarria Brevard kickflip at Embarcadero, 2023
Photo by Norma Ibarra

Dana Jeck (Shag), skating the granite base of the Mechanic's Monument on Market Street, 2023. Photo by Norma Ibarra.

Public Programs



9,049
YOUTH
PROGRAMS

255,601
ATTENDANCE
including Storytimes



3,958
STORYTIMES

150,321
ATTENDANCE

12.7%
INCREASE IN
ATTENDANCE
over prior year



5,598
ADULT AND
ALL-AGES
PROGRAMS

169,430
ATTENDANCE

5,261
PATRONS
attended ESL programs

6,377
PATRONS
attended Jobs, Careers and
Small Business programs,
31% increase from previous
year

Summer Stride

Summer Stride, the City's all-ages summer reading program, took another huge step this year. Throughout the summer months, the Library offered 3,693 in-person programs and 99 virtual programs. 30,234 people signed up for the program, including 15,584 children and 12,907 adults. And 20,829 people made it to the finish line in 2025, a 14% increase from the previous year! All told, San Franciscans read more than **30 million minutes** from June through July 2025.

While a new study released in 2025 revealed that daily reading for pleasure in the United States has declined by more than 40% over the last 20 years, 87% of Summer Stride participants reported reading more this summer. 74% of the participants reported learning something new thanks to Summer Stride, and 79% said that Summer Stride encouraged them to use library resources more often.

Kenard (Ken) Pak, a San Francisco-based picture book illustrator and animation art director, was SFPL's 2025 Summer Stride artist and the illustrator of the 2025 Summer Stride featured picture book *On a Summer Night* by Deborah Hopkinson. His art delighted all of San Francisco, all summer long.

"We appreciate it all. We home educate and the Library is the most important resource for us in our community."

"I love all of the programming to be honest. From the giveaways to the chamber orchestra to story time. I am so proud of all the library does!"

"It's one of my favorite parts of the year! I look forward to it every summer! Plus I'm a library super fan!"

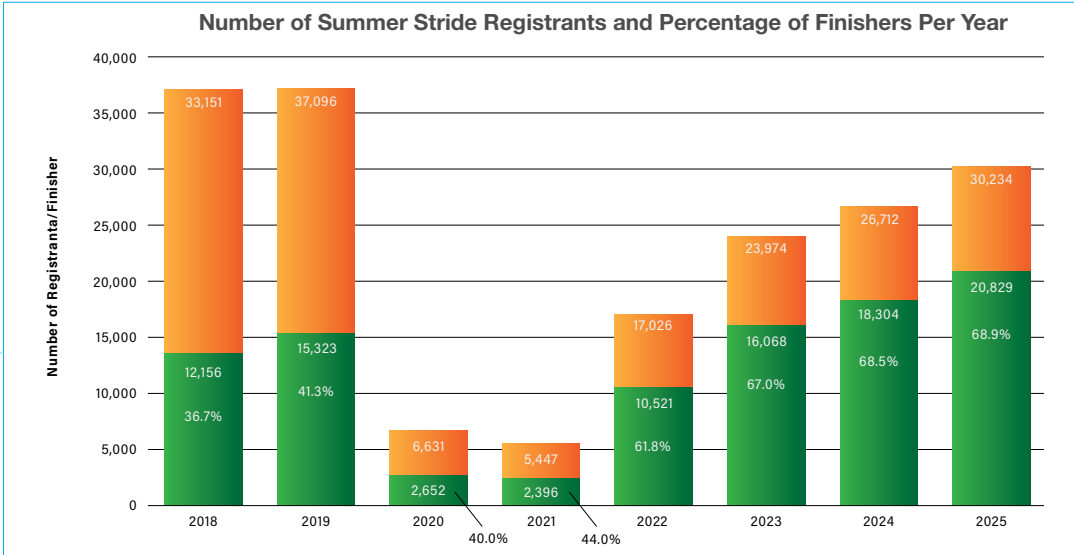
"I value a summer program that actively engages older children (ages 9-11) with age-appropriate activities, such as exciting book selections."



30,234
READERS
SIGNED UP
including 15,584 children
and 12,907 adults

20,829
STRIDE
FINISHERS
14% increase from the
previous year!

\$520K
SUMMER BOOK
GIVEAWAYS
budget



Top 5 Circulating Titles



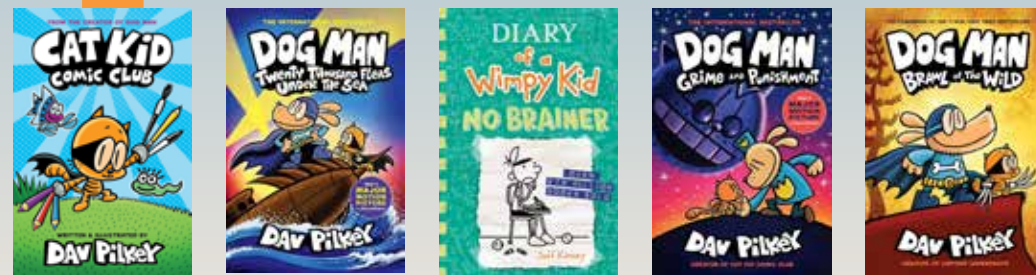
Adult Fiction

1. *The Chinese Groove* by Kathryn Ma
2. *The Women* by Kristin Hannah
3. *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin
4. *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride
5. *Intermezzo* by Sally Rooney



Teen Fiction

1. *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas
2. *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas
3. *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
4. *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson
5. *A Court of Wings and Ruin* by Sarah J. Maas



Juvenile Fiction

1. *Cat Kid Comic Club: Influencers* by Dav Pilkey
2. *Dog Man: Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea* by Dav Pilkey
3. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: No Brainer* by Jeff Kinney
4. *Dog Man: Grime and Punishment* by Dav Pilkey
5. *Dog Man: Brawl of the Wild* by Dav Pilkey



eAudioBooks

1. *The Women* by Kristin Hannah
2. *Funny Story* by Emily Henry
3. *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett
4. *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver
5. *Yellowface* by R. F. Kuang



Adult Nonfiction

1. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
2. *Poverty, by America* by Matthew Desmond
3. *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt
4. *Solito* by Javier Zamora
5. *Crying in H Mart* by Michelle Zauner



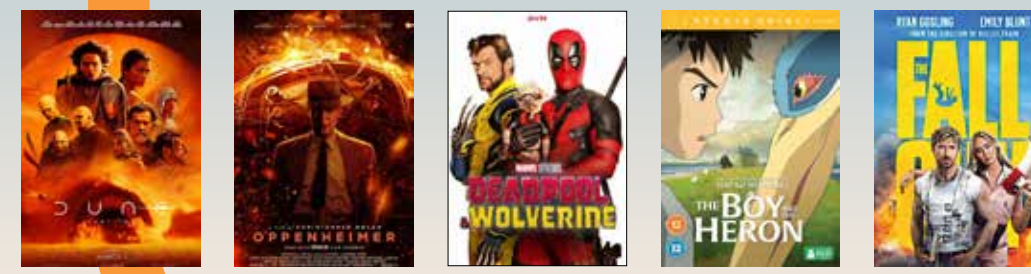
Nonfiction eBook

1. *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone* by Lori Gottlieb
2. *The Let Them Theory* by Mel Robbins
3. *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Kimmerer
4. *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt
5. *The Psychology of Money* by Morgan Housel



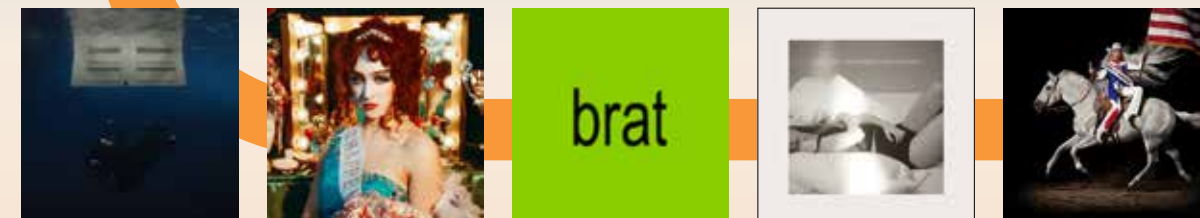
Fiction eBook

1. *Funny Story* by Emily Henry
2. *The Women* by Kristin Hannah
3. *Fourth Wing* by Rebecca Yarros
4. *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese
5. *All Fours* by Miranda July



Movies – Adult/Teen DVD/Blu-ray

1. *Dune, Part Two*
2. *Oppenheimer*
3. *Deadpool & Wolverine*
4. *The Boy and the Heron*
5. *The Fall Guy*



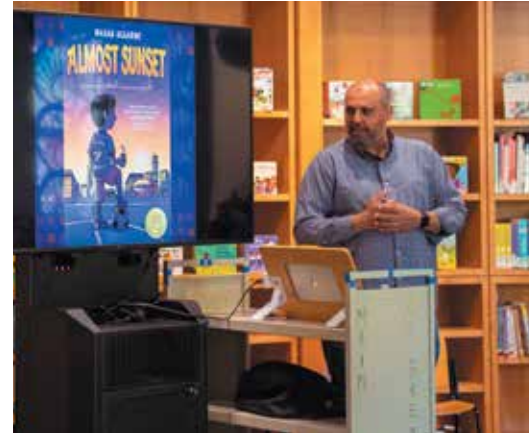
Music CD

1. *Hit Me Hard and Soft* by Billie Eilish
2. *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess* by Chappell Roan
3. *Brat* by Charli XCX
4. *The Tortured Poets Department* by Taylor Swift
5. *Cowboy Carter* by Beyoncé



Decodable Readers Launch

After a year in development, SFPL was thrilled to launch its new Decodable Readers books in August 2025 at every SFPL branch location and the Main Library Children's Center. This curated collection is designed to support children in developing essential reading skills through engaging and accessible materials. The Decodable Readers collection is intended to provide families and caregivers with reading materials they can take home. It also supports San Francisco Unified School District's goal to achieve 70% reading proficiency for third grade students by 2027.

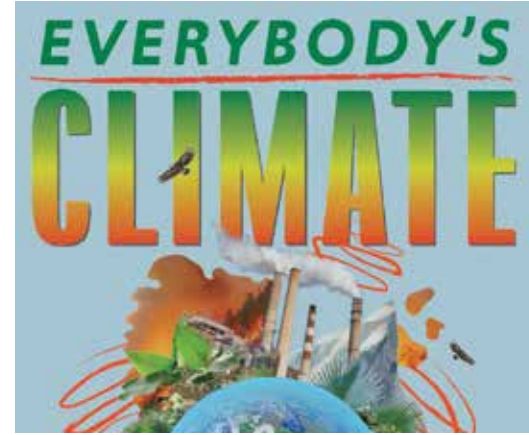


Comic Book Arts Fest

SFPL debuted a Comic Art Fest this spring as part of the Main Library's open house, which aimed to welcome in neighborhood families. Highlights of the event included a photobooth for fun family photos, hands-on activities, featuring the creativity and spirit of the SF art scene. The Fest featured local comic artist, Wahab Algarmi, author of *Almost Sunset*, visual storyteller Fred Noland and artist Jessica Jane Robinson.

Lastly, resident librarian for PBS and PBS kids, as well as the new host of "Reading Rainbow," Mychal Threets delighted youth and their families with a vibrant storytime.

Photo by Ruth Montes Avila.



Everybody's Climate

SFPL presented the return of Everybody's Climate this July, an exemplar of the Library's commitment to climate literacy education. This series aims to inspire patrons of all ages to take action for a safer, greener and more sustainable future. Everybody's Climate offers a variety of events, including films, concerts, book club discussions and poetry readings, and includes both in-person and virtual programming. The Library partnered with the San Francisco Environment Department for several programs, including a climate action book club and a workshop on electrifying your home.



Financial Capability Month and Financial Planning Day

SFPL also delivered on its promise to advance financial literacy for all San Franciscans through its annual Financial Planning Day and Financial Capability Month programs, hosted by the Business, Science and Technology Center at the Main Library. During Financial Capability Month, April 2024, SFPL offered free programs to support patrons' financial success and future goals. Throughout the month, the Library hosted events 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. And during Financial Planning Day, in October 2024, individuals participated in financial workshops on Zoom and met one-on-one with a Certified Financial Planner™ for free, objective, no-strings-attached financial advice. The event is a great opportunity for a private consultation with an expert on a wide variety of personal finance issues, including budgeting, retirement planning, investment strategies, income taxes and insurance, among other topics.



Tech Week

This year, The Bridge at Main hosted two editions of its popular Tech Week program to advance tech literacy for the public. In partnership with community organizations, they hosted the event October 5–12, 2024, to time with Digital Inclusion Week, an annual event to raise awareness for digital equity solutions. And in May 2025, The Bridge hosted another round of the program, presenting nearly 40 free programs. The week-long series of programs offers technology resources and educational opportunities for all ages and skill levels. To help bridge the digital divide, it takes place throughout San Francisco, at various Library and partner locations, as well as online, featuring some programs in Spanish and Chinese.





Genny Lim, San Francisco's Newest Poet Laureate

In fall 2024, SFPL was thrilled to announce Genny Lim as SF's 9th Poet Laureate. Lim is the first Chinese American poet to serve in this role. A beautiful inauguration ceremony took place in the Asian Art Museum in September 2024, and Lim quickly became involved in Library programs, delivering on her mission to bring poetry to San Franciscans.

One memorable event was the Drumbeats, Heartbeats: Communities As One program. San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) and SFPL, in partnership with Booker T. Washington Community Service Center, the API Heritage Foundation and Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, presented this celebration of the Lunar New Year and Black History Month. An exciting, kinetic procession of Indian and West African dance and drums joined together with Chinese lion dancers to kick off an electrifying evening of music, dance and poetry with Lim and former San Francisco Poet Laureate Tonge Eisen-Martin.



Photo credits, top to bottom: Genny Lim. Photo by Kit Castagne; Drumbeats and Heartbeats program, photo courtesy of the SF Human Rights Commission. Photo by American Legal Video Services.



Filipino American Book Festival

The Filipino American International Book Festival (FilBookFest) returned to the Main Library on October 12 and 13, 2024, for its 7th iteration, continuing its legacy as the largest Filipino American literary festival in the U.S. This year's theme was, "KAISÁ'T KASAMA: Celebrating Our Diverse Voices and Solidarity," with a weekend of literary celebration, cultural pride, and solidarity. Held during Filipino American History Month, FilBookFest brought together more than 60 writers, scholars, and creatives from across the globe, including the U.S, Canada and the Philippines, to the iconic San Francisco Public Library.

The 2024 keynote speakers were Ninotchka Rosca, renowned novelist and feminist activist, and Elaine Castillo, author of *America Is Not the Heart*, *How to Read Now: Essays* and the recent novel *Moderation*.

Photo by Chris Ceguerra.



Booked & Beautiful

In January, the Hormel LGBTQIA Center presented the launch of Booked & Beautiful, a recurring series of unfiltered, unapologetically Queer and Trans-focused programs in the style of TV talk shows. Hosted by Bay Area artist and personality SNJV, the event brought his sparkle and shine to the Library through storytelling, performances, videos and interactions with the audience. The first edition featured VERA!, an Armenian American drag king and dancer. The second episode featured Taipei, a digital creator and fashion and beauty history expert. The third episode featured Tito Soto, an iconic performer and producer known as the "Drag Prince of the West Coast."



Photos courtesy of M. Sanchez Studio.

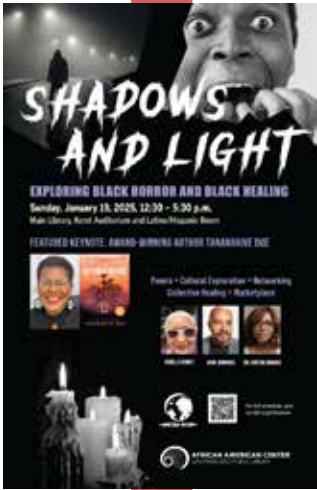


Shadows and Light

In January, on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Library in partnership with Sistah Scifi announced a unique community gathering, Shadows and Light: Exploring Black Horror and Black Healing. Featuring a keynote presentation by esteemed author Tananarive Due, winner of the American Book Award for *The Living Blood*, Shadows and Light was a space for horror enthusiasts who often find themselves questioning the representation of Black characters in horror movies. Two panel discussions, “Shadows of the Past: Historical Contexts of Black Horror” and “Healing Through Horror: Future Directions,” explored the role of Black horror in literature and its potential as a medium for healing. Other featured guests included authors Jewelle Gomez, John Jennings, LaDarrion Williams, Hayley Dennings, Tamika Thompson and Michele Tracy Berger, as well as Dr. Kinitra Brooks and psychiatrist Justin C. Key.



Photos by Sarai Montes.



Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros

SFPL and Department of Early Childhood threw its famous family block party, the annual Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros festival in April, at Parque Niños Unidos. Día celebrates the importance of literacy for children from all backgrounds and welcomes children and their families to enjoy an afternoon filled with music, activities and free books. This year marked the 26th anniversary of Día in San Francisco, featuring an exciting lineup of fun and entertainment. New this year, the event began with an hour of sensory friendly time, during which no amplified sound was played for individuals with auditory sensitivity.



Photos by Kit Castagne.



Pride at the Library

San Francisco Public Library celebrated Pride Month 2025 with vibrant, intergenerational programming across nine branches and online, hosting 33 events including Drag Story Hours, queer karaoke and the talk show Booked & Beautiful. Highlights included a hybrid author panel with Sistah Scifi celebrating Octavia Butler’s legacy and a strong presence at the Trans March Resource Fair, where 600 affirming books were distributed. A dynamic social media campaign and a new Pride landing page amplified visibility. The month culminated in SFPL’s largest-ever Pride Parade contingent—75 staff, family and friends—joined by a dance squad and drag icon Per Sia, celebrating inclusion and community.



Top photo by Amy Espiritu.

Night of Ideas

San Francisco's only all-ages, free mega-event Night of Ideas returned this year on April 5, transforming San Francisco Public Library, the Asian Art Museum and Fulton Plaza into a hub for dialogue, art and civic engagement. Under this year's theme, "(un)Common Ground," the event explores how art, technology and diplomacy shape our collective future. This year's event brought back Afternoon of Ideas, offering interactive and engaging activities for children and parents alike. Highlights included a puppet show, Drag Story Hour and hands-on art experiences with a letterpress printer and children's book illustrators.

Throughout the night, festival-goers browsed a Small Business Marketplace featuring local artisans, and experienced the grand unveiling of the SPECTRA Public Light Sculpture out on Fulton Plaza. The Sisters



of Perpetual Indulgence put camp and whimsy into arts and craft with their Socks of Perpetual Indulgence Puppet Workshop and a Bohemian Rhapsody lip-sync finale in the Library's Atrium!

A multidisciplinary program of live performances curated by Circuit Network animated the night, featuring acts from a local theatrical troupe and a gamelan shadow puppet performance by Harmonic Drift. Fashion enthusiasts enjoyed a look at the BART Project Doneway Fashion Show, while dance lovers relished a performance by ODC. Live performers regaled audiences in the Atrium along with DJs on Fulton Plaza curated by EMPIRE. The night's conclusion invited attendees to boogie down at SF Discothèque, presented by Friends of the SFPL & Value Culture, with DJ Beatific spinning beats under the Library's atrium disco ball.



Courtesy of KQED. Photos by Estefany Gonzalez and Vita Hewitt.



One City One Book: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

In Fall 2024, SFPL announced its surprise 19th One City One Book selection, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Dr. Maya Angelou. The title was chosen to time with the unveiling of the new monument honoring Dr. Angelou, *Portrait of a Phenomenal Woman* by Lava Thomas, on the front steps of the Main Library overlooking Civic Center. Angelou's debut memoir is a modern American classic beloved worldwide.

Exciting programs offered by the Library included a panel on women in public art, a celebration of poetry and performance to honor the legacy of Dr. Angelou curated by Dr. Kim McMillon and an exhibition, *Dear Sister Maya Angelou*, which drew from the San Francisco History Center's recent archival acquisition, the GLIDE Historical Records.

Photo from SFPL SF History Center.

Branch Open Houses



Anza Branch



Chinatown Branch



Excelsior Branch



Glen Park Branch



Noe Valley



Photos by Kit Castagne.



Visitacion Valley Branch

Thoughtful Navigator



You Are Home Immigration Resource Centers

This year, the Library launched new “Citizenship Corners” in every library branch, as well as in the Main Library’s Government Information Center. Aimed at newcomers to the City, these information hubs contain books on citizenship and immigration, Know Your Rights cards, brochures on immigration resources in English, Spanish and Chinese and other useful resources. Additionally, staff were trained on how to assist patrons looking for resources online.



Small Business Strolls

Building on the success of the Tenderloin Small Business Stroll from the previous year, the Main Library’s Small Business Center (SBC) expanded the Stroll into a quarterly series responding to neighborhood needs and opportunities: Glen Park, a quiet corridor with low visibility; Valencia Street, a long-standing business district mobilizing against formula retail; and the upcoming Clement Street, a vibrant multicultural corridor. The SBC led a 2.5-hour guided tour spotlighting five small businesses through short interviews, shopping and socializing. By activating commercial corridors and connecting entrepreneurs with merchant associations, city partners and library resources, the Stroll transforms a simple walk into a meaningful, human-centered experience that supports SFPL’s mission to connect communities to learning, opportunity and one another.

Tapped-In Magazine Exhibition

In partnership with the Returning Citizens Association, SFPL hosted a celebration of authors and artists who have been incarcerated or impacted by the criminal legal system. In recognition of its second issue of *Tapped-In Magazine*, the Returning Citizens Association (RCA) showcased an afternoon of performances, storytelling and an exhibition of visual art by system-impacted people at the San Francisco Main Library. In addition to the exhibition and performances, the event featured a Book Fair for authors who have been incarcerated or whose lives have been negatively impacted by incarceration. The Book Fair also featured formerly incarcerated writers who have received widespread recognition for their work, such as Earlonne Woods, co-host and co-creator of the award-winning podcast, *Ear Hustle*.





Read to Recovery

A major milestone was achieved this year: SFPL delivered on its promise to fully roll out its Read to Recovery collection to all 27 branch locations and the Main Library. Legislation was signed into law in fall 2024 to make books on addiction recovery free of charge at all SFPL libraries. This initiative provides free-to-keep recovery program titles from Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, LifeRing and Refuge Recovery, along with supplemental and supportive volumes addressing various aspects of addiction and recovery. San Francisco was the first city in the country to fund universal access of free-to-keep literature related to all recovery traditions.



As of July 2025, the program had distributed 8,205 free books through its locations. The Sunset and Chinatown Branches were the latest branches to launch Read to Recovery in June 2025. Word has quickly spread about this resource. Local recovery program organizers frequently visit the library to collect copies for their meetings. The initiative has already inspired at least one other library system; the Saratoga Springs Public Library in New York launched its own Read to Recovery program in May 2024 after consulting with SFPL.



Fix-It Clinics

From bicycles to clothing, library staff partnered with helpful local community experts to offer more than a dozen fix-it clinics this year. Working under the auspices of the city's zero waste goals to keep items out of landfills, Library staff and San Francisco's Department of Environment embarked on a robust series of hands-on clinics to teach people the skills to encourage repair and reuse of their items.



SF SCRAP offered a team of expert tailors and seamstresses to help teach sewing skills and salvage clothing with easy repair techniques while the Bay Area BikeMobile provided repair services and bike components to keep bicycles riding smoothly through our city.



Preservation Week

The Library's beloved preservation experts and archivists offered a series of workshops this year to help residents protect their precious family photos and documents stored and forgotten in closets, basements or even on mobile phones, computers or floppy discs. With tips aimed at addressing mold outbreaks, handling and storing damaged scrapbooks, albums, bibles and even favorite cookbooks, and maintaining newer born-digital collections, these workshops aimed to protect our community's historic legacy for generations to come. In addition, dedicated DIY workshops were held to empower transgender community archivists to preserve documents and photographs from their collections in a shared safe space. And in the Excelsior neighborhood, a home movie day encouraged people to bring in their 8 mm, Super 8 and 16 mm films for a community watch party and discussion of preservation techniques.



Staff Recognitions and Milestones

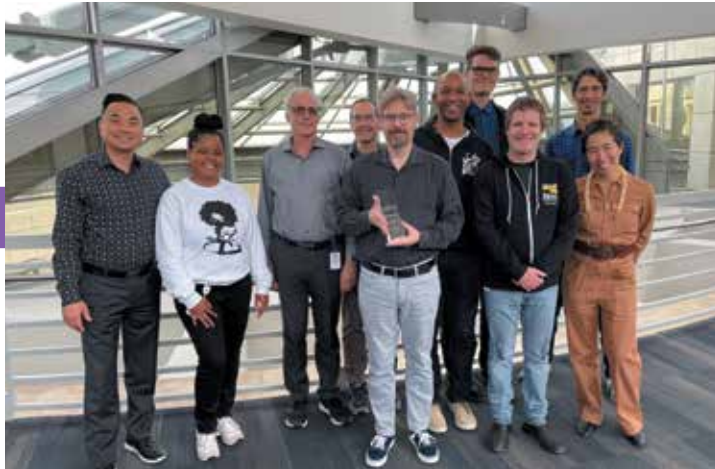
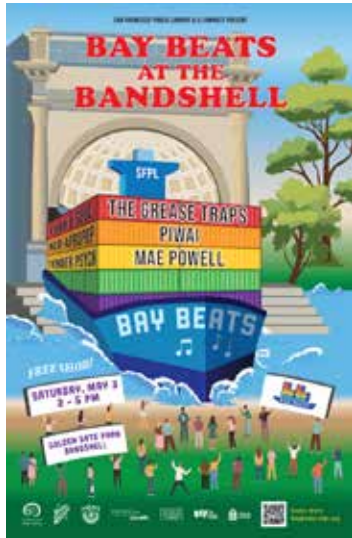
Congratulations to the recipients of this year's City Librarian Awards, given to those who embody the Library's mission in their work, Doreen Horstin and Michael Perlstein. Recipients of Core Value Awards were Patrick "Pat" Conway, Julieanne Randolph, Joseph "JoSep" Ferrer, Lisa Valerio and the Richmond Branch. Lastly, Strategic Priorities recognitions went to Leni Matthews, Jeanie Austin, the Exhibitions Team, the Human Resources Team and Alice Chan.



Notable Recognitions

Urban Libraries Council Innovation Award: Bay Beats

The Urban Libraries Council (ULC), North America's leading nonprofit for urban libraries, named San Francisco Public Library as a Top Innovator for 2024. This recognition was in honor of San Francisco Public Library's Bay Beats music streaming platform, which promotes the music of Bay Area musicians to support and get out the word about the local thriving music scene. The project won in the category of Advocacy and Awareness for its originality, measurable outcomes and the potential for other libraries to replicate and implement this successful initiative. More than 230 library projects in six categories were submitted by ULC members from across the U.S. and Canada to be considered for the top awards.



California Library Association PRExcellence Award: Best Things in Life Are Free and Bay Beats Campaigns

California Library Association's PRExcellence Awards Committee named SFPL's "The Best Things in Life Are Free" campaign as the winner in the \$30M+ Budget – Print category. Judge comments included: "Creative and innovative design with high production value. Eye-catching and humorous way to promote library services", and "Exceptional concept in print design. I love the lightness and humor combined with tons of info on library offerings."

SFPL also won the PRExcellence Award for its submission, "Bay Beats: Leaning on a Grassroots Outreach Marketing Strategy to Support SF's Music Scene" in the \$30M+ Budget – Event or Campaign category. One judge wrote, "As someone familiar with local music streaming library projects, I can attest to what a successful campaign this appears to be! I love the logo they developed – it has a retro style that evokes memories of seeing bands growing up on the SF Peninsula. The print materials are spectacular, too. The use of partners for outreach and the level of media attention is astounding. Great work!"





Mission Branch

Work on the Mission Branch renovation continued apace this year, with 50% completion of the project in June, under the careful oversight of the Library's Facilities division in partnership with SF's Department of Public Works. While the Mission Branch staff continued to provide service excellence at the temporary branch location at 1234 Valencia St., just down the busy corridor, structural steel was being installed, concrete flooring was being poured and the historic stairway leading up to the refurbished reading room was being restored. In addition to their day-to-day operations and programming, the Branch staff and Chief of Branches office were also engaged with procuring shelving and furniture for the renovated branch and determining a fresh, exciting collection that would appeal to the Mission community upon reopening.



Chinatown Branch

SFPL was excited to announce a key development in fall 2024, the securing of a temporary branch location at 950 Grant St. at just a few blocks away from the Chinatown/Him Mark Lai Branch Library. With such a central spot, the Library is looking forward to partnering with community neighbors on programs and events, and welcoming patrons to enjoy Library resources. To prepare for the move, the Chinatown Branch staff has been working hard to update its collection to ensure a smooth transition.





"My 5-week-old baby started crying and the librarian sang us 'You Are My Sunshine' while I checked out my books. We are so lucky to have such wonderful people work at our library. SFPL is a really special institution."
—Potrero Mom

"The library is a safe space for me. I love checking out the different branches around the city, and I greatly appreciate all the resources and events that are provided for free. SFPL is definitely one of my favorite things about living in the city! Thank you!"
—Mina B.

"Amazing resource that I've rediscovered since retiring and Covid! I'm remembering the joy of reading. I'm in the Opera in You class. I hope to join the knitting group one day. I love the architecture and space. Uplifting just to be there. It is the place of endless possibilities, new discoveries, old interests revived. Love the friendly staff. And free copying! Viva la biblioteca!"
—J. May C.

Mark Gonzales ollieing "The Gonz gap" at Embarcadero, 1985. Photo by Mörizen Föche.