

FY ANNUAL 25 REPORT



Your next chapter starts here



Metropolitan
LIBRARY SYSTEM

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A MESSAGE FROM JASON

As we look back on Fiscal Year 2025, I am proud of all we accomplished together. This year was defined by growth, connection and celebration across the Metropolitan Library System. Several of our libraries reached major milestones—60 years for Bethany Library, 70 years for Midwest City Library, 50 years for Southern Oaks Library, and 60 years as a countywide system—each one a reminder of the deep roots libraries have in our communities.

This was the year I joined as CEO, and it has been a privilege to see the creativity of our staff, the dedication of our volunteers, the generosity of our partners and the enthusiasm of our guests. Their combined efforts powered record engagement, expanded access to resources and strengthened the impact of our programs.

Behind the scenes, staff made remarkable progress: growing our local history collections, updating technology like new book sorters, completing major repairs and developing day-to-day displays, cataloging and services that keep our branches vibrant.


Our momentum is reflected across our usage numbers. Attendance grew, digital access reached new highs, and participation in Summer and Winter Reading programs continued to climb.

We surpassed four million checkouts on Libby and now rank 17th worldwide on that platform. By the end of FY25, we also became the 16th-ranked library system globally on hoopla, with more than 50 percent growth in circulation.

Outreach services expanded to seniors, families and students, ensuring that library access remains available to all, while the Friends of the Library and the Library Endowment Trust continued to advance community literacy, supporting programs like Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

We also had a monumental year in our community as our Oklahoma City Thunder became NBA Champions, and our library staff, including myself, were so excited to participate in the celebrations.

As you explore this report, I hope you feel the same pride I do. Thank you for being part of our story. Your next chapter starts here, and together we are creating a stronger, more connected community.

Warmly,

JASON F. KUHL, MSLIS
CEO, METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM


OUR VISION

We empower and connect our diverse communities by providing equitable access to knowledge, technology and spaces to learn, grow and connect.


OUR VALUES

Outstanding Service | Access for All | Representation | Integrity
Stewardship | Community Collaboration | Staff Empowerment


USAGE & ENGAGEMENT REACH NEW HEIGHTS



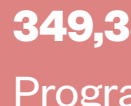
15,509,028
Wi-Fi Sessions (+42%)




11,698 Programs
Offered




378,408
Public Computer
Sessions




349,330 Library
Program Attendees




2,955 Hotspot
Checkouts




7,719
Notarizations




3,489,585
Catalog
Sessions




1,677,141
Database
Usage



3,302 Experience Pass Checkouts
760 Discovery Backpack Checkouts
2,114 Makerspace Sessions (+15%)



548,921
Card
Holders



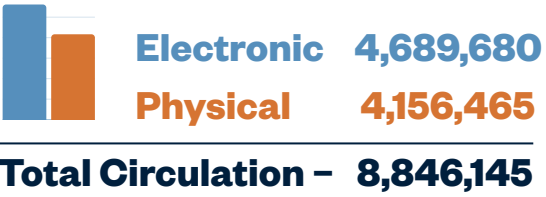
56,958 Room
Reservations
(+12%)



Library metrics showcased impressive growth across various activities in FY25. These statistics highlight the increasing engagement and use of library resources, reflecting Metro Library’s significant role in community development.

Digital engagement has skyrocketed with Wi-Fi usage up 42% from last year, providing necessary access to our community in accessing information and learning.

Circulation



Drew and Kathy Mehner (left) pose with author Betty Blanks and Karen Neurohr at the Edmond Library at a poetry program.

LIFELONG LEARNING IN ACTION

Drew and Kathy Mehner made it their 2024 goal to try new things and embrace creativity, attending free programs at MLS branches like yoga, needle felting, woodcarving, crocheting, paper quilling and dance lessons.

A couple of their favorite events are Paint and Sip at Del City Library and an Intro to Sourdough class at Belle Isle Library.

“The library has a wealth of instructive information, and you’ll discover more about yourself and want to try new things,” Drew said.

Their library involvement goes beyond programs. They have tried new recipes from cookbooks, experimented with take-home spice kits like Luther Library’s Spice Chronicles and continued learning at home.

“Libraries have always been a safe place of discovery and wonder,” Kathy said. “Every day, our lives are touched by the library, through a book we check out or a new skill we learn.”

We are thankful for supporters like the Mehners. Thank you for being a part of our story.

POWERFUL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Through the efforts of our Outreach and Engagement Services (OES) department, we’re transforming our community. The dynamic partnerships they’ve forged bring a wealth of expertise and resources into our libraries. These collaborations provide immense opportunities for our guests, paving the way for them to grow, learn and thrive like never before.

Highlights

- Experience Passes continued to provide library guests with free access to seven community museums.
- Hosted more than 150 performances through the Neighborhood Arts program with the Arts Council of OKC, Oklahoma Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts throughout the metro at libraries, Scissortail Park, Harrah Senior Center and Rodeo Cinema in Stockyards City.
- Coordinated Oklahoma City-County Health Department Mobile Market visits.
- Large community outreach events like KidsFest with MetroFamily, YMCA Healthy Kids Day, and DiscoverFest at Science Museum Oklahoma, talking with thousands of attendees about the library and signing community members up for library cards.
- Outreach staff coordinated the School Library Media Specialist Breakfast to promote Summer Reading and other library resources and provide training to school librarians across the county.
- OES worked with OKC Public Schools to ensure students at all Summer school sites participated in Summer Reading and received prizes.



What’s Next?

Our network of partners is growing, helping us reach even more of our community. We’re excited to bring more enriching programs to our guests in the year ahead.



Painted Sky Opera, as a part of the Neighborhood Arts program.

Library by Mail

We believe that everyone deserves the joy and enrichment that books bring. Our Library by Mail service sends books and audiobooks for free to people aged 65 and older who have health or mobility problems. They also receive monthly newsletters with recommended titles.

12,828 Checkouts to 346 unique Library by Mail guests

Onsite Libraries

The Metropolitan Library System has onsite libraries in Oklahoma County. You can find them in places like senior living homes and child development centers. We change the books and audiobooks at these locations every six to eight weeks, so seniors and kids who might not go to a library can still enjoy them.

55,006 Checkouts to 97 Onsite Libraries



SUMMER READING SUCCESS

The Metropolitan Library System's Summer Reading Program is an annual initiative to keep readers of all ages engaged during the summer.

With fun activities, events and prizes, it combats the "Summer Slide," a decline in academic skills when children are out of school. By promoting daily reading, the program builds literacy, supports lifelong learning and fosters a love of books, making summer both enjoyable and educational. **This year, 50% of our participants in Summer Reading completed the challenge.**

Library staff are crucial to the Summer Reading program, creating engaging activities for all ages. They organize story times, crafts, and hands-on events, manage logistics, curate resources and promote the program to boost participation. Their commitment transforms libraries into lively summer centers that inspire learning and creativity.

13,164,971 POINTS

18,300
participants
– a nearly
5% increase



WINTER READING WINS

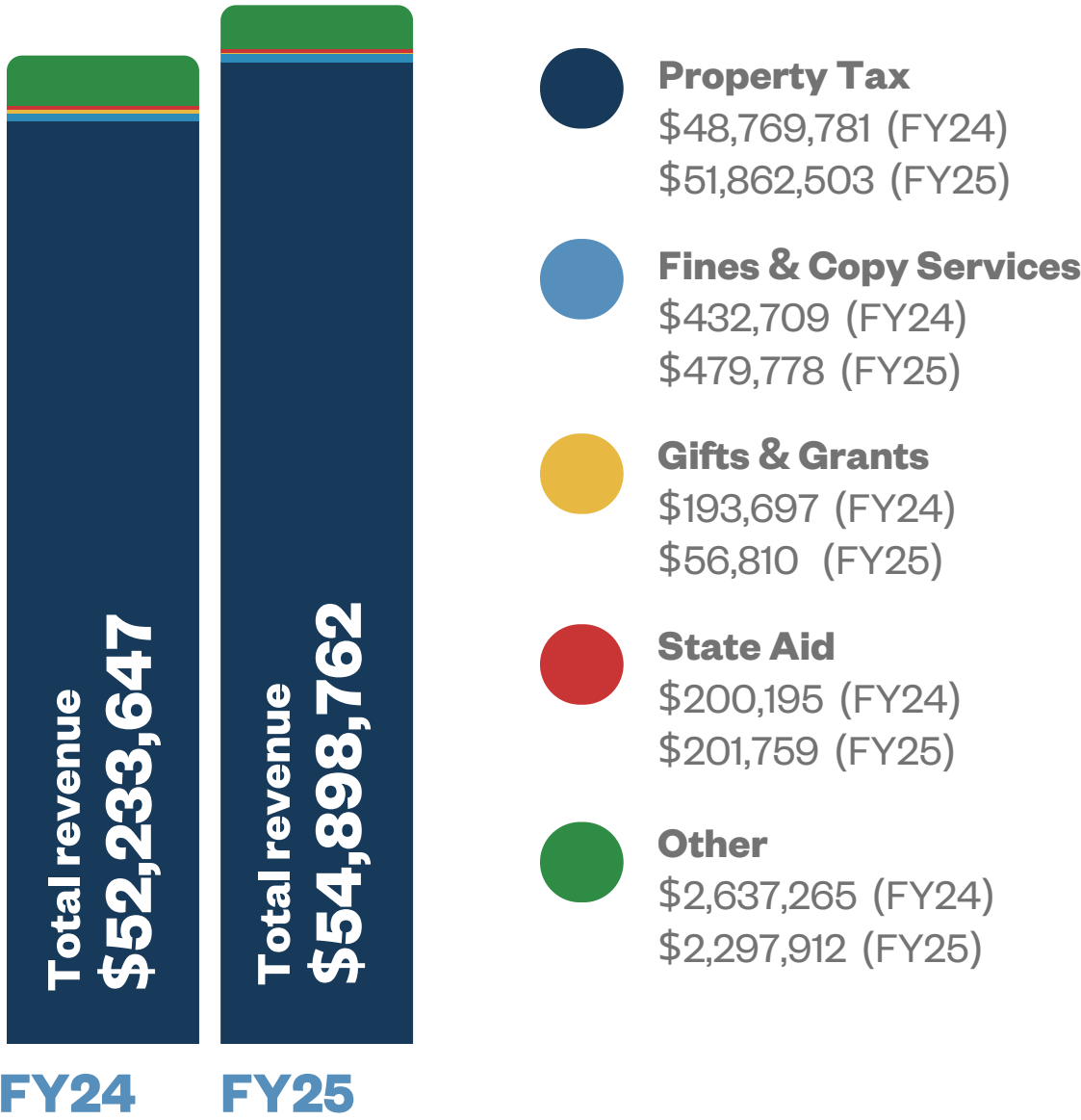
The Metropolitan Library System's Winter Reading is an annual initiative to keep adults engaged with a fun bingo-themed activity, reading prompts and a goal of a unique Winter Reading mug upon completion. Like Summer Reading, library staff are crucial to the Winter Reading program, facilitating logistics and resources and promoting the program to boost participation.

This year, we had over 4,000 total participants, with the most ever completing the program and earning prizes.

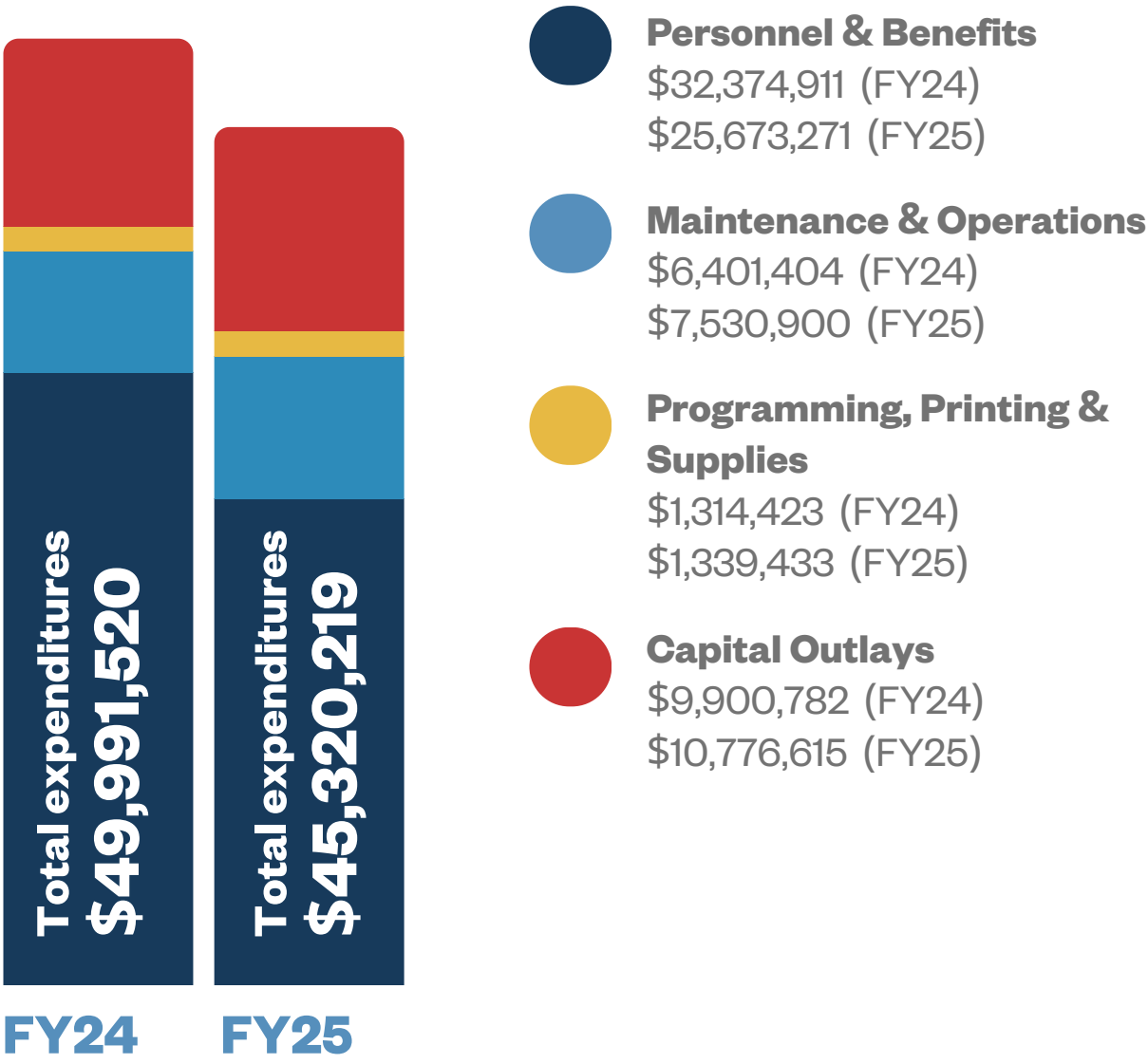
4,000
Participants

FY 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

Revenue



Expenditures



DYNAMIC PROGRAMMING

Our robust year-round programming, offered both inside and outside our libraries, engages, educates, and enriches our community while supporting lifelong learning and cultural connection. Throughout the year, we hosted thousands of events, including LEGO clubs, technology workshops, mobile food bank visits, financial literacy classes, Total Wellness visits, and the popular Knitty Committee at The Village Library. Signature programs included the October Paranormal Fest at the Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library and the Indigenous Artists and Authors Fair at Belle Isle Library, which one attendee described as “life changing.”



Children's author Mary Nhin visited the Edmond Library in May.



The LitFest event hosted writers of all genres and ages at the Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library in August 2025, with hundreds in attendance.

In November, we collaborated with our sister library in Düsseldorf, Germany for an international Children Reading to Dogs event, and the holiday season brought festive events such as Ye Olde Village Yuletide and Noon Year's Eve celebrations across multiple locations. The new year opened with metro-wide Dolly Day activities, followed by the well-loved Crowns Tea at Ralph Ellison Library for Black History Month, and in May we hosted the iconic GeekCon at the Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library.

Other library programs include:

- MetroGrows program promotes health literacy through gardening tools
- Discovery Backpacks help kids explore themes like water conservation and exercise.
- Young Storytellers at Edmond Library encourages young writers ages 5-23, and offers a chance to have published books added to our collection.
- Capitol Hill Library's Food Bank Kids Cafe Program provides meals for children ages 4-18.



We welcomed Dr. Karlos Hill for a talk on the Tulsa Race Massacre, drawing over 100 attendees.



Author Russell Cobb at the Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library and Del City Library, discussing his genealogy research.



Michael Korenblit, son of Holocaust survivors, shared his story at three branches.

PRESERVING COMMUNITY MEMORIES

Our Special Collections and Research (SCR) Department deepened its role as a steward of local history, expanding access, strengthening community partnerships, and preserving stories from across Oklahoma County.

This year, SCR partnered with Luther Library, the Luther Historical Society, and the Elizabeth Threatt Luther Community Center to host the Luther Memory Project, helping residents digitize photographs, documents and oral histories. The team also supported a community Scan-A-Thon at Bethany Library and continued its long-term collaboration with Del City to preserve artifacts and scrapbooks dating back to 1948.

Engaging Programming

SCR programming reached every library in the system. Collaborations with the Oklahoma State Fair brought nostalgic activities like DIY pennants and miniature clay fair-food kits.

Programming tied to the Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center’s “Honor Song” exhibition drew strong participation, with more than 500 take-home kits distributed and over 140 attendees at in-person events. SCR also partnered with RACE Dance Collective to offer the program Understanding Contemporary Dance.

The Luther Memory Project at the Luther Community Center.



Expanding Collections

- SCR added 38 new collections this year, including the Oklahoma City Council of Garden Clubs, Inc. Collection, which features scrapbooks and member books documenting the state’s oldest garden club.
- This year, Metro Library formed a new partnership with the Threatt Family, owners of the Historic Threatt Filling Station in Luther. SCR added 963 items documenting the personal and business records of Elizabeth and Ulysses Threatt, whose filling station is a National Historic Monument and part of the Route 66 National Historic Route.
- SCR expanded the Oklahoma Underground Music Archive, adding new materials such as zines, flyers, clothing and more than a thousand community-contributed digital images. The collection also sparked programming like the Library Out Loud concert series and inspired a local zine that now distributes over 1,000 copies monthly to 50+ OKC locations.

Traveling Collections

After wrapping up a successful 2024 tour of the Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Reference Library (OCARL) collection, the department brought the Holocaust Resource Collection to three library locations. Locations averaged 50 checkouts of Holocaust-related books, and circulation of the collection at Downtown rose as well. In cooperation with community partners, related programming garnered 200 combined attendees to hear Michael Korenblit, son of concentration camp survivors, tell the story of his family and encourage acceptance and peace.

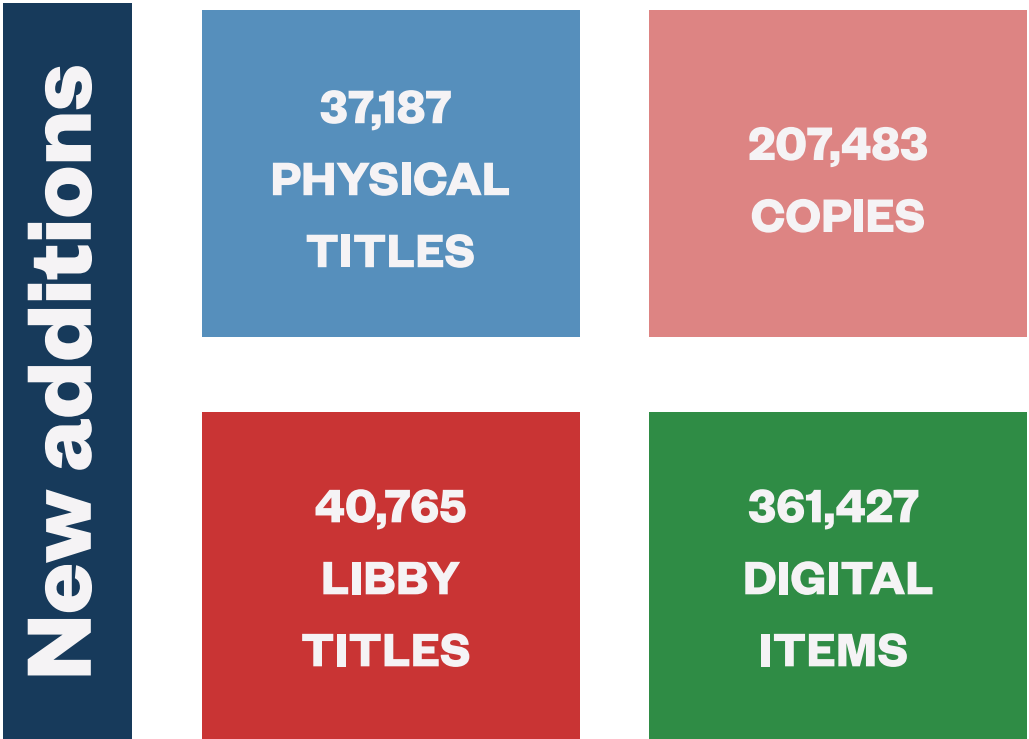
By the Numbers:

- **38 new archival** and special collections added
- **23% growth** in collections
- **6,000+ items** digitized and made available online
- **250 research** questions answered
- **10,000+ online views** of SCR’s Oklahoma City Walking Tours



GROWING OUR COLLECTION

In FY25, Our Collection Services and Development department grew our collection, creating access to more reading and learning materials for Oklahoma County.



PARTNERS IN LITERACY

“You’re doing your child a huge favor for their long-term literacy, for their education.” - Amber Arterburn

The Metropolitan Library System benefits from two dedicated supporting organizations: The Friends of the Metropolitan Library System and the Library Endowment Trust.

The Friends of the Metropolitan Library System raise funds through memberships and book sales, generating nearly \$5 million for grants, learning tools, programs and staff scholarships since their inception. Their annual book sale attracts nearly 25,000 people. This year, they earned more than \$343,000 from book sales and expanded their capacity to host two sales, including a new “mini” fall sale at the Bethany Library in October 2024. The Friends also held quarterly donation drives, and the community contributed more than half a million items to help build inventory for future sales.

Both organizations support Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, which provides free monthly books and educational newsletters to Oklahoma County children under five.

22,158 total
children served

201,766
books gifted

Did you know?



**2025 marked 30 years
of Dolly Parton’s
Imagination Library!**

We are proud that more than half of eligible children in the county are enrolled. The Friends and the Trust collaborated closely to sustain funding for this program and are now working to strengthen future nonprofit support for the library, including a planned realignment of the two organizations in FY2026.

Gifts to the Friends and the Library Endowment Trust supported Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, staff scholarships, expanded technology and special collections resources, and high-quality program and event supplies. Donor support also helped us provide toys and materials that encourage learning through play for children across the system.

FRIENDS AND ENDOWMENT TRUST ELEVATE LIBRARY SERVICES



The Library Endowment Trust hosted Jodi Picoult, who presented her research and thoughts on her most recent book, "By Any Other Name" to 275 library supporters.

The Library Endowment Trust supports reading programs, building renovations, and new library construction. It receives funding from community donations and the annual Literary Voices fundraising event. This year, the Trust worked hard to raise additional support and hosted another successful Literary Voices program. The event drew hundreds of attendees, brought in new sponsors, welcomed new library visitors, and generated strong excitement within the literary community.

PARTNERS IN LITERACY: VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a key role in our success. By working with our staff, volunteers help young visitors meet their reading and homework targets, organize and shelve books to keep the library in order and so much more.

This year, 270 teen volunteers poured in an incredible 4,462 hours to make our Summer Reading program a hit!



Carter, teen volunteer

“I love being a teen volunteer because I get to meet new people and make new friends.”

Pam, volunteer

“Children Reading to Dogs is just my little way of giving back to the community, and I love getting to help children learn to read. I know that Molly and I are meeting the leaders of tomorrow.”



803

unique volunteers

15,373

hours in volunteering



TURNING THE PAGE TO 2026

As we celebrate the successes of the past year, we are energized by what lies ahead. Together, we have expanded access to knowledge, culture, and opportunity for thousands, creating momentum that will carry us into an even stronger future. With our second Edmond location opening in 2026, the coming year holds great promise and marks an important chapter for our system.

We have made significant progress with the new East Edmond Library, which will expand access to one of our fastest-growing communities. The current Edmond Library is the busiest in the state, and the new \$31 million location at 15th Street and I-35 will help meet that demand. It will include 12,000 square feet of library space, meeting rooms, a MakerSpace creativity lab, and a convenient drive-thru book drop. Its design focuses on welcoming, shared spaces, a larger collection, and educational programs that strengthen our communities.

The year ahead is already filled with inspiring events, and 2026 also brings centennial celebrations of Route 66. In April 2026, we will welcome author Jonathan Franzen for our annual Literary Voices series. Our new Oklahoma Poet Laureate, Hallie Waugh, is planning engaging programs across the system. We will begin the year with a close-up photography exhibit, “Small Wonders: Insects in Focus,” at the Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library from Jan. 28 to March 16, along with creative programs tied to the exhibit.

Thank you for supporting your library and helping create a brighter future for all, one program, one book, and one connection at a time.

Thank you for being part of our story.

METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

LOCATIONS

Almonte Library	2727 SW 59 th St., Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 606-3575
Belle Isle Library	5501 North Villa, Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 843-9601
Bethany Library	6700 NW 35 th St., Bethany, OK	(405) 789-8363
Capitol Hill Library	327 SW 27 th , Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 634-6308
Choctaw Library	2525 Muzzy St., Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 390-8418
Del City Library	4330 SE 15 th St., Del City, OK	(405) 672-1377
Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library	300 Park Ave., Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 231-8650
Edmond Library	10 S Boulevard, Edmond, OK	(405) 341-9282
Harrah Library	1930 N. Church Ave., Harrah, OK	(405) 454-2001
Jones Library	9295 Willa Way, Jones, OK	(405) 399-5471
Elizabeth Threatt Luther Library	310 NE 3 rd , Luther, OK	(405) 277-9967
Midwest City Library	8143 E. Reno, Midwest City, OK	(405) 732-4828
Nicoma Park Library	2240 Overholser, Nicoma Park, OK	(405) 769-9452
Patience S. Latting Northwest Library	5600 NW 122 nd , Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 606-3580
Ralph Ellison Library	2000 NE 23 rd , Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 424-1437
Southern Oaks Library	6900 S. Walker, Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 631-4489
Stockyards City Library	2101 Exchange Ave., Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 235-5035
The Village Library	10307 N. Pennsylvania Ave., The Village, OK	(405) 755-0710
Warr Acres Library	5901 NW 63 rd , Warr Acres, OK	(405) 721-2616
Metro2Go Library Kiosk	1501 W. Covell. Rd., Edmond, OK	(405) 231-8650

