



Agenda: Board of Trustees
September 4, 2025, at 4 pm
Community Room, Ladd Library

Access, Connection, & Service

Library Board President – Monica Challenger

- A. Call to Order
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: August 7, 2025
- C. Public Comments and Communications
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- F. Board Education: Summer Reading Challenge – Kevin Delecki
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
 - Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** Policy 2.01 Reconsideration Policy
 - **Action:** Policy 3.08 Right to Protest, Petition, and Assemble
- H. Library Director's Report
- I. Old Business
- J. New Business
- K. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees meeting is **October 2, 2025 at 4 pm**, in the Conference Room, Downtown Library.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service, or activity, should contact Jessica Musil, Library Administrative Assistant, at 319.261.7323 or email musilj@crlibrary.org as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
August 7, 2025

Board members in attendance: [President] Monica Challenger, [Vice President] Jeremy Elges, Chris Casey, Susie McDermott, Elisabeth Hepworth, Jade Hart (in person)

Board members unable to attend: Hassan Selim, Ana McClain, Rafael Jacobo

Staff in attendance: Dara Schmidt, Amber McNamara, Kevin Delecki (in person); Patrick Duggan (via Zoom)

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation; Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (in person)

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: July 3, 2025

Ms. Hart moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Casey seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.
- C. Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
 - Ms. Tyler reported. The Foundation is excited to host the Back to School Social again this year – the last event was 2019. This year's event will include two school buses – one for exploration and one for rides – outside the downtown library on 4th Avenue, which will be closed from the railroad tracks to 5th Street. Corda Credit Union, an event sponsor, and other volunteers will lead activities to honor kids graduating from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) and starting kindergarten this fall. In addition, the event will include two story time events.
 - The Foundation is also planning their Van Vechten Society Brunch on September 7. Seven new blocks will be added to the recognition wall to honor individuals for their memorial or estate gifts. Many family members will be at the event. Invitations have been sent.
 - Ms. Tyler is working toward closing the Inspiring Big Dreams campaign. They are working on ways to connect donors to the project as construction continues toward completion.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - Ms. Slappey reported. Friends of the Library will sell children's books at the Back to School Social as well as participating with other volunteers in support of the event. Summer sales are going well with the Farmers Market though one July date was canceled due to storms. The following market day was record setting, earning over \$3,000.
 - Amazon sales continue to do well. Ms. Slappey highlighted a recent sale for a book. The volunteer team seems to have an eye for what will sell on Amazon.
 - Ms. Slappey wanted to formally thank the library staff. First, staff are very helpful when community members stop at the library to donate materials for future sales. Sometimes, this includes large donations, ranging from a few boxes up to 25. She appreciates the assistance so Friends can accept donations at any time during open hours at both locations. Second, she wanted to thank library staff for allowing extra space and staging of materials as well as coordination ahead of the weekend sales. It is very helpful to ensure well run sales.

F. Board Education: Strategic Plan – Dara Schmidt

- Ms. Schmidt reported. She handed out printed copies of the strategic plan and highlighted key pieces from the digital document. In May, the board approved the plan; since then, library leadership made plans on how to implement it. The executive summary expresses our excitement in the work ahead for our community with the mission, vision, and strategic priorities.
- Under Access, Ms. Schmidt will lead the initiative *Adjust to financial realities* in year one, starting this July. She will work with the Finance Committee and Senior Management Team to make decisions by February 2026 as we open a new library. We need a strategy to grow as a library system with anticipated drops in property tax revenue as well as function at its best for the community.
- Library staff will work on three Connection initiatives in year one. Some of the work has already started in the planning stages and will be essential to open the new library. The Programming team held a staff retreat this past spring to start discussions and write goals on *Embrace the span of essential literacy and offer tailored supports based on community need*. Public Service and Programming will work together in two parts for *Meet community partners where they are to enhance support for those in crisis*. This year-long initiative will start with Public Service to review data and identify target populations and associated community partners to support downtown behavior intervention. Following this work, Programming will implement two new or modified partnership/outreach opportunities to promote library service and expectations outside the crisis cycle to reduce behavior issues in those target populations. Ms. Challenger asked about the possibility of re-engaging partners in work they no longer provide. Ms. Schmidt noted that this is certainly possible as the pilot gets underway. In July 2026, we'll re-examine the data to inform and modify work in year two. In addition, we'll work on increasing and improving collections for *Prepare for a new building as part of a cohesive library system with two branches with unique services and populations*. The goal also includes grand opening plans.
- For Service, *Advocate for our future* will run the full fiscal year. Community Relations Manager Amber McNamara with Ms. Schmidt plan to research how to be strategic while being responsive to local, state, and federal aims. This will help them to develop effective goals. The Urban Library Council (ULC) Annual Forum conference will discuss this topic in October. Our library will attend and hopes to bring back many key takeaways.
- The library's new video promoting the mission was played for attendees. The Community Relations' Media Intern created the video. Her work, which focused on high interest and quick videos, increased social media engagement. The video will be posted on social media accounts soon.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hepworth reported. The committee continues to make use of the advocacy toolkit, sharing about access to library materials. For example, inter-library loan materials are now distributed through a new delivery system. This isn't necessarily impacting our patrons but it is impacting the speed in which other patrons outside of our library system receive materials. We used to get daily service through Iowa Shares but now it's down to once a week, significantly reducing our materials across the state outside of the Metro Library Network libraries.
- Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hart reported. There are three major projects for the library at this time: Westside Library construction project and downtown's roof replacement and Urban Plaza refresh.
 - The Westside Library project has experienced some delays with the rain that have not impacted the overall timeline. Sandberg Lane has been poured, and pending permits, they hope to connect it to 20th SW soon. Exterior is nearing completion

with the roof and the masonry walls especially after the basement stairs are dropped in. The building should be enclosed by October. Inside the building, teams are framing walls to prepare for dry wall. A group is meeting to discuss collections and shelving needs for an ideal opening collection we can expand.

- The recommended vendor for the Urban Plaza project will go to City Council for approval at the August 12 meeting. It did come in over budget but this has been resolved. Following approval and contracts, we can schedule a pre-construction meeting. Until then, we won't know a timeline. Historically, work starts within weeks after the meeting. Ms. Tyler noted that the Library Foundation is proud to provide a majority of the funding for this project.
- T&K Roofing has completed the major tear off and re-installation of the roof membrane. Now, the sheet metal team is re-attaching the metal caps along the roof's parapet. The project is still on track to be complete by mid-August.
- Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Casey noted there is no report because June financials are not available yet as the fiscal year closes.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - Ms. McDermott shared that the committee has no report or policies for review.

H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt reported. Although we do not have June financials, we do have end of fiscal year statistics with comparisons to FYs 23 and 25 in the packet. This is the first time since COVID that we haven't had a natural disaster for two years in a row that impacts service. The data shows that we have been consistent in our service from this year to last year. Annual visitors were about the same. For meeting rooms, reservations were down but number of users increased as people are starting to have larger meetings again. Physical circulation went down a little bit but overall circulation increased slightly. Cardholder data is also relatively consistent. Ms. Schmidt feels good about the data and is looking forward to the growth we'll experience next year when the new library opens.

I. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

J. New Business

- There being no new business, the meeting continued.

K. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:59 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, September 4, 2025, at 4 pm in the Community Room, Ladd Library

To: Chris Casey, Finance Committee Chair
From: Dara Schmidt
Date: 8/28/2025
Subject: August Committee Meeting Financial Report

FY26 Budget

July Financials

Since we are only reporting the first month of the fiscal year, there are no significant details or concerns. More details will be provided as we move into the fiscal year.

Café Contract

After discussion with the Finance and Leadership of the Board Committees, Library staff will prepare and release an RFP for a new café vendor.

Janitorial Contract

The current contract with FBG expires in November. The Library is working with City purchasing to release a new RFP for janitorial services. The request will include current service levels and an amendment for later add-ons is expected once Westside Library service begins.

Materials Budget

In the midst of FY25, the City of Cedar Rapids received a new opinion from their bond attorneys stating that digital collections where the library does not hold permanent ownership cannot be purchased through bond funds. This change means that for FY27 budget requests, the Library intends to adjust the \$500K total CIP materials budget to approximately \$300K and maintain the overall budget by increasing operations by \$200K. This is not an increase or decrease in budget, merely a reallocation of funds due to new rules interpretations. For FY26, the Library is working with the Finance department to reallocate current funds to ensure a continued digital collection.

FY27 Budget

The FY27 budget process is expected to begin in October.

Reconsideration of Material

This policy functions as a procedure to be used by individuals or groups seeking a reconsideration of library materials held in the library collection.

Library customers may request books or other materials to be added to the collection. The Cedar Rapids Public Library Board of Trustees supports intellectual freedom and subscribes to the principles of the [American Library Association Library Bill of Rights](#). The library staff applies the criteria described in the Library Bill of Rights and the Library's [Collection Development Policy](#) to provide books and materials that reflect the diversity of viewpoints within the community.

The board recognizes that individuals may question library materials that do not support their tastes and views. Library staff is available to discuss concerns, and identify options and alternate materials. If concerns are not satisfied through a discussion with staff, residents of the city of Cedar Rapids may request a formal reconsideration of library materials.

The board has adopted a process for the formal reconsideration of library materials. This process ensures that questions about specific items in the collection are handled in a prompt and consistent manner. Requests for Reconsideration are taken by the library's Materials Manager. The Materials Manager assigns at least two additional staff members to review the material in question and make a recommendation. The Library Director will make a final decision to keep or remove the material.

The material in question will remain in the collection and available to patrons during the reconsideration process. Items the Library Director deems appropriate for the collection will not be removed except by court order.

Adopted: 2/7/2013

Last Review: 4/4/2019, [9/4/2025](#)

Revised: 12/02/2021, 02/02/2023

Request for Reconsideration of Material

Author: _____

Title: _____

Date request received by staff: _____ Staff initials: _____
____ Materials Manager ____ Staff Committee ____ Library Director

Type of Material: ☐ Book ☐ Movie ☐ Music ☐ Digital ☐ Game ☐ Other

1. Describe your concern about the material. Please be specific including page numbers.

2. What do you believe is the central theme of this material?

3. In your opinion, is there anything good about this material, any redeeming quality?

4. Are you aware of any professional or literary reviews of this material?

5. What materials can you suggest to counterbalance the point of view of this material?

6. Did you read/watch the entire material?

Name: _____

Representing: ☐ Self ☐ Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Adopted: 2/2013

Revised: 09/2015, 12/02/2021, 02/02/2023

Right to Protest, Petition, and Assemble

At the Cedar Rapids Public Library ("Library"), we value civic engagement and free expression of ideas. People have the right to protest, petition, and assemble on public property. The Library has the right to place reasonable and viewpoint-neutral restrictions on such activities.

The purpose of a library is to provide a place for reading, writing, and quiet contemplation. People may not engage in disruptive behavior within the Library or interfere with library patrons' quiet use and enjoyment of the Library. Accordingly, people may not protest, solicit signatures, petition, or assemble in large groups with the purpose of protesting or petitioning within the Library, unless they are in meeting space reserved by a member of the group for that purpose. People are welcome to attend public programs at the Library, subject to occupancy restrictions, but are required to follow all Library policies.

People may petition, protest, and gather in groups on public sidewalks or areas on Library property that are designated by the Library in its sole discretion from time to time for the purpose of public discourse. People may not protest or gather in a way that interferes with patrons' ability to enter and exit the Library safely and without obstruction. Those intending to gather for purposes of protesting or petitioning are asked to contact the Library twenty-four hours in advance to identify the currently designated areas.

Gatherings shall not impede motor vehicle or pedestrian traffic or disrupt any regularly conducted Library activities or programs.

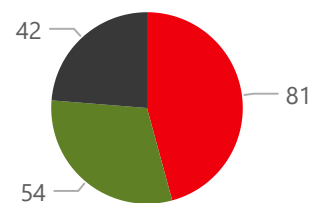
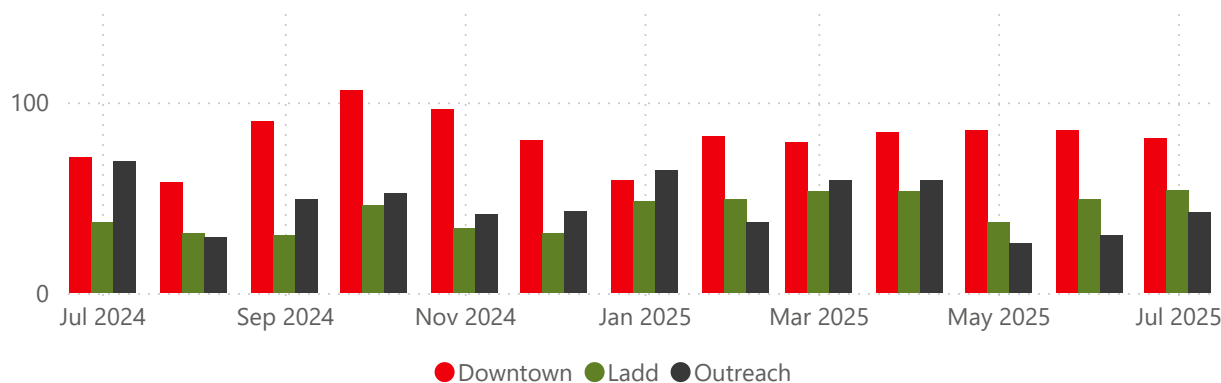
People participating in assembling, protesting, or petitioning at the Library or within a Library meeting space shall be subject to and abide by the Library's policies, including the behavior policy. People gathering inside the Library are subject to Library's operating hours and may not be in the Library outside of those hours. The presence of protesters or petitioners on or near Library property in no way constitutes an endorsement by the Library of the viewpoints expressed by such protesters or petitioners.

Failure to follow Library policies may result in removal from Library property and/or official action.

Adopted: 07/06/2023

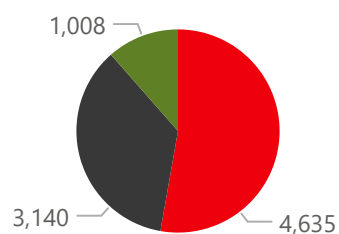
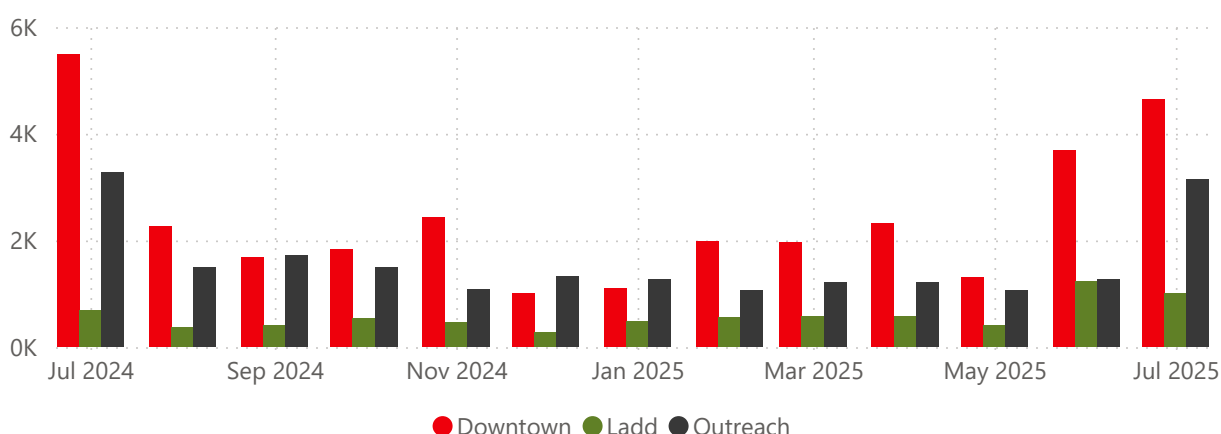
[Reviewed: 9/4/2025](#)

Programs



177

of Programs



8,783

of Attendees

Programming spent this month wrapping up Summer Reading, and getting ready for Fall! 2025 was another very successful Summer Reading Challenge, with all participation metrics within 10% in either direction of last year's record setting numbers. Surveys have also been sent out to all staff members to learn what is working well across the library, and possible improvements for next year and beyond. Many thanks to the entire library team for their promotion, participation, and hard work surrounding the Summer Reading Challenge, and a special thanks to our Seasonal employees, who gave up their summer breaks from school and work to help the library be successful.

Looking ahead to Fall, we are in the midst of planning our school outreach and putting the final touches on in-library programs. Keep an eye out for some pretty exciting events!

I received a call from a patron asking if we had any resources/programs for people learning or speaking German language. My immediate answer was 'no, I am sorry we do not'. But then I started peeling the layers in the question and gave her not one but several options: Mango Languages, foreign language films (DVDs) in German, books on learning German, a suggestion to post on Cedar Rapids-specific social media groups and making meeting room reservations at the library (yes, free of cost!) for the group's weekly/monthly meeting and last but not the least...a suggestion to use the 'suggest a program' link on the library's website. It was a win-win situation. Patron felt satisfied with the options that they had and felt they were set for success after our conversation. I felt satisfied that we have so much to offer and 'no' is never an answer here. - Sampurna Ghosh, Public Service Associate

I was helping a young man, 24, at the Lary A. Nelson Center with a resume and when he learned that I'm from the Library, he said "No way! I have my first pass from here today and I'm using it to go to the Library and hopefully get my reading prizes! I did the summer reading program while I was in jail and it kept me sane. My fiancé helped me record my minutes all summer!" He was so excited and it was seriously adorable. - Erin Norwood, Opportunity Center Coordinator

Borrowing & Collections

23,568

Databases

17,957

Digital

46,470

Physical

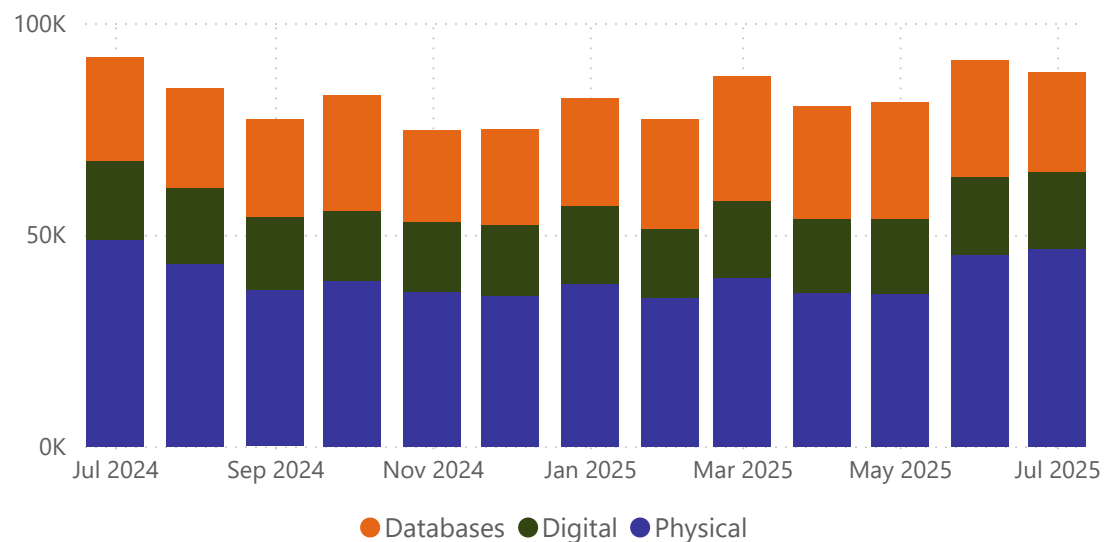
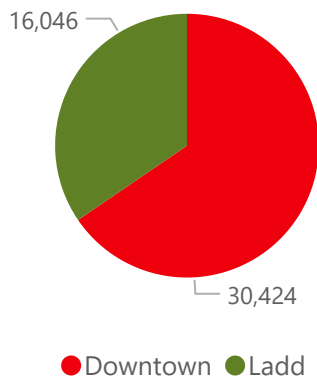
375

Technology

88,370

Total

Physical Circulation, by Location



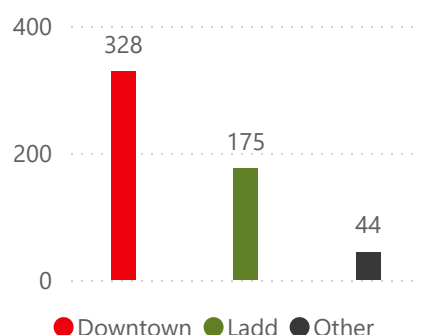
The Materials Department is beginning the process of planning layouts and shelving capacity for the new Westside Library. Some materials staff met with OPN and vendor representatives for LFI (Library Furniture International) to review shelving options. We discussed several fun and creative shelving options for the children's collection to make things easy and accessible for our littlest patrons. Most of the current collection at Ladd will move to the new building after weeding out some worn materials. Some new materials will refresh the collection before opening in the new building.

Based on our renewed contract with Polaris, the Metro Library Network has new text and notification service through Polaris rather than another vendor. So far, this has been a smooth transition and allows us to modify these processes more easily.

Volunteers

Volunteer Hours

547
Total Hours



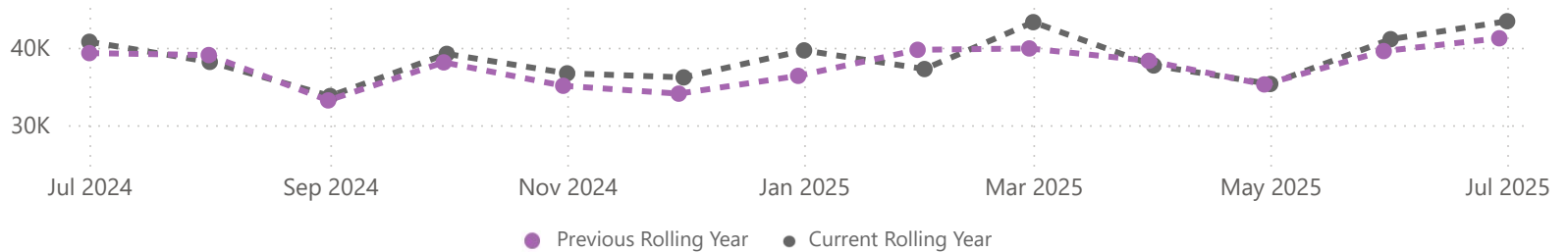
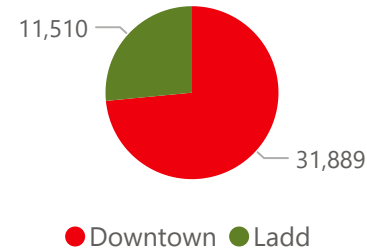
In early August, volunteers helped the library wrap up the Summer Reading program at our End of Summer Carnival event. Eight volunteers helped host this event by volunteering over 26 hours collectively. These volunteers assisted with crafts, hosted games, handed out snacks, greeted patrons, and ran a dance/hula room. Volunteers help make large-scale events like this possible for our library and our community.

Volunteer Hours in July 2025: 490

Visits

43,399

Physical Visits



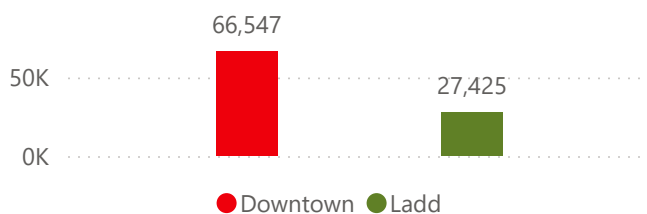
The Public Service Team is ready for another school year to start. We saw great success this summer and the team did a tremendous job supporting the amazing work our Programming Department put in the Summer Reading Program. Overall, staff had many meaningful interactions with library patrons of all ages who participated in the program. We saw many returning users and welcomed many users into the library!

As school starts, we are especially excited to build on the amazing work we put into building relationships with our teen population over the summer. While we saw challenging situations towards the end of the school year and the start of the summer, the team did a great job addressing the behavior and establishing relationships which we hope will carry us forward into the new school year.

One day while on the floor, I was straightening shelves and roaming. I noticed a patron standing near the shelves and looking around so I approached her and asked if she needed any assistance finding something. She smiled and said that she was from out of state but she would come in occasionally when she was visiting family. She went on to say that she loved Ladd Library and it was always such a nice experience for her when she visited. - Lexi Bibbs, Public Service Associate

Technology Access

PC Uses



253,733

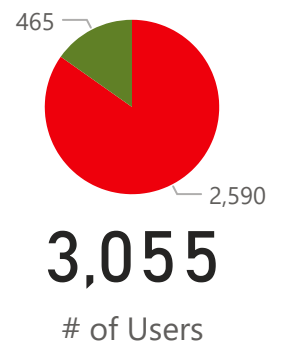
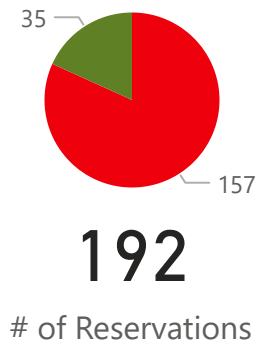
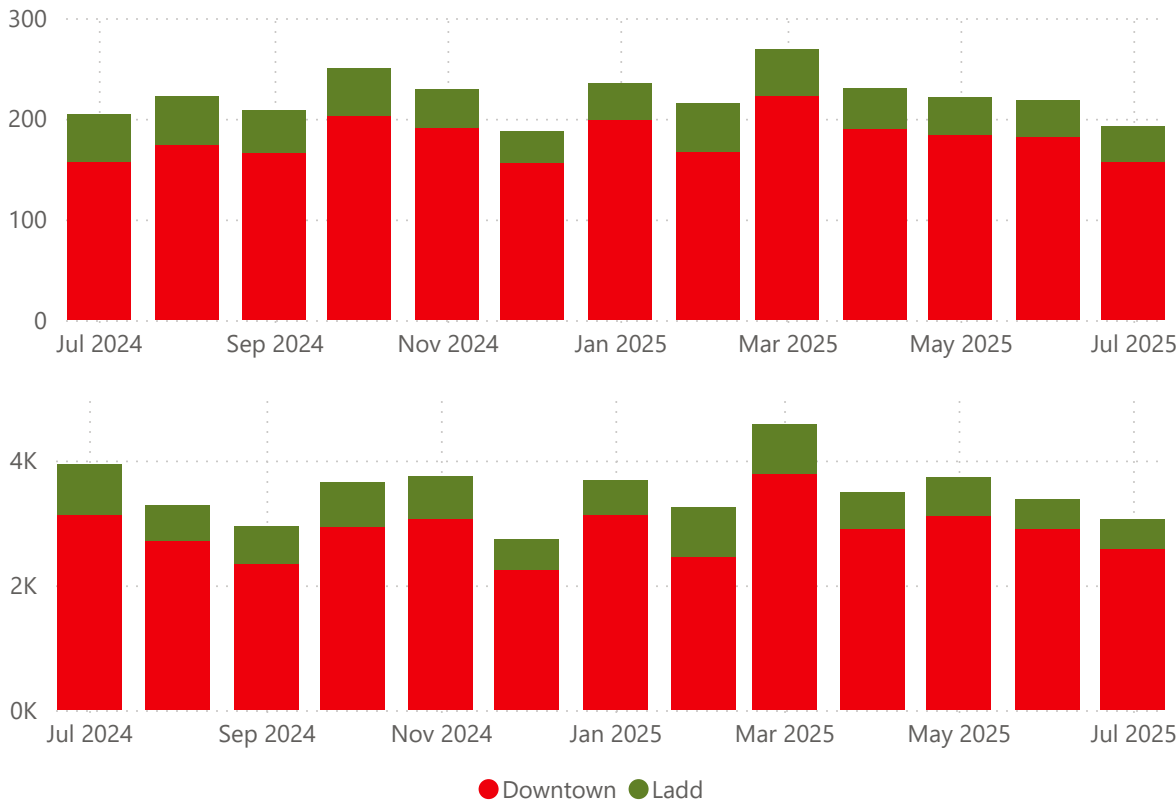
Virtual Visits

121,327

WiFi Sessions

The Technology Solutions team is beginning to make plans for tech equipment that will either need to be moved from Ladd over to the new building or purchased new before opening. Many of the supply chain issues have eased in recent years but the team wants to leave sufficient lead time for purchased equipment to get here in time. This team will also work on installation of public computers, self-checkout kiosks, and other library technology in the building.

Meeting Room Use



Meetings rooms were often occupied with the energy of summer programming this month. Overall, there were a total of about 192 reservations serving 3,055 patrons. Groups of all types met at the library, again, this month. The shift in the seasons was also apparent as sports groups met to coordinate the new season and educators were preparing for the fall. There were also homeschoolers and exam takers using the library this month. Other noteworthy reservations were peer support groups including Mental Health First Aid training for Lived Experience Council, advocacy groups and St. Vincent DuPaul's Back2Work programs planners.

Community Relations is working on our FY2025 Annual Report, which will be ready in October. It's a great opportunity to review all the amazing programs and services offered throughout the year, and highlight the stories of impact in our community. We are always amazed at the amount of incredible work that is done in a single year by our library team.

We are also taking time to update our Brand Book. This is our reference guide for branding throughout the organization and helps us maintain a clean and consistent brand.

Two patrons came in after someone at their bank said the library would be a good place to get the help they needed. There was a boy and his grandfather. The boy's mother and grandfather's daughter had passed away in 2024, and left expired cash cards with balances on them. They were attempting to get the balance off the cards for the son. We called the card company who told us the documents we had to submit in order to move forward. We submitted the documents they requested and they told us to contact them in two business days. The next week the two patrons came back and we contacted the card company, who requested more documents. This dynamic continued over several weeks, and included getting a document notarized at one point as well (shout out to Kristine!). After submitting documents multiple times a week, over several weeks (we joked that we were having regular Tuesday and Friday afternoon meetups), the card company finally said they were sending a new card with the transferred balance to the two patrons. - Wes Shirley, Branch Supervisor

Calendar of Initiatives: FY26-27 Plan Year One									
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