



2025

Annual REPORT

Where People & Possibilities Meet

www.washcolibrary.org

ANNUAL REPORT

Board of Trustees.....	2
A Word from the Executive Director.....	3
Library Visits.....	4
Cardholders.....	4
Circulation.....	5
Collections.....	5
Accessibility.....	6
Technology.....	7
Programs and Events.....	8
Financial Overview.....	12
Staff Breakdown.....	12
Return on Investment.....	13
Partnerships.....	14
Support Us.....	16

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**WASHINGTON COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY**

Where People & Possibilities Meet

Mission

The Washington County Free Library is committed to building a strong, interconnected, diverse community by bringing people, information, and ideas together.

**100 South Potomac Street Hagerstown, MD 21740
301-739-3250 | washcolibrary.org**

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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Patrons, Supporters, and Friends of the Washington County Free Library,

This past year at the Washington County Free Library has been one of growth, connection, and community. More people than ever are turning to the library as a place to learn, explore, and gather: visits rose by 10% from FY24 to FY25, and circulation of materials increased by 10.6%. Each visit, each book borrowed, is a reminder of the vital role the library plays in the lives of our residents.

Making the library accessible to everyone is at the heart of what we do. This year we increased remote locker capacity in the North End and opened a new location in the South End of Hagerstown, giving residents more convenient access to the materials they need, when they need them. Our Outreach Services provided more events outside of library branches in the spirit of the library's first Director, Mary Titcomb who famously said: bring the books to the reader.

We've also expanded the ways we support lifelong learning. Adult programs grew by 18%, offering everything from homesteading and gardening workshops to low-waste and classes focused on self-reliance. These programs provide practical knowledge that helps residents thrive at home and in their communities, demonstrating that the library is more than books: it's a place to build skills and confidence.

Our commitment to children and young learners continues to grow. Public school students benefit from RAIL cards, which allow them to use their school ID to access library resources, while homeschool families enjoy robust programming designed to inspire curiosity and learning beyond their classroom.

The library's role in fostering community goes beyond education. This year, families came together through Community Baby Showers, in partnership with the Washington County Health Department, in Hancock, Clear Spring, and Williamsport, providing essential supplies to new parents. Our long-standing partnership with Books for Babies ensures that every child born in Washington County receives a book and early literacy resources, giving them a strong start in life.

From helping families grow to teaching skills that strengthen independence, the past year has shown how much our community can accomplish when we support each other. We are grateful to our staff, partners, and patrons whose dedication and enthusiasm make the library a place where everyone belongs, learns, and thrives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Z. Bakos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

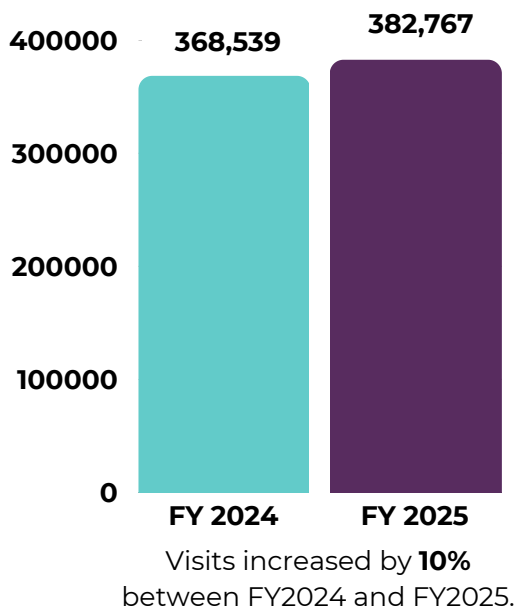
Jenny Bakos, Executive Director



LIBRARY USE

Residents of Washington County visited the system's **eight libraries** and **two bookmobile's** over **382,000** times! WCFL's collection of **525,140 physical materials** and **203,604 quality digital library offerings** ensures there is something for everyone to enjoy.

LIBRARY VISITS

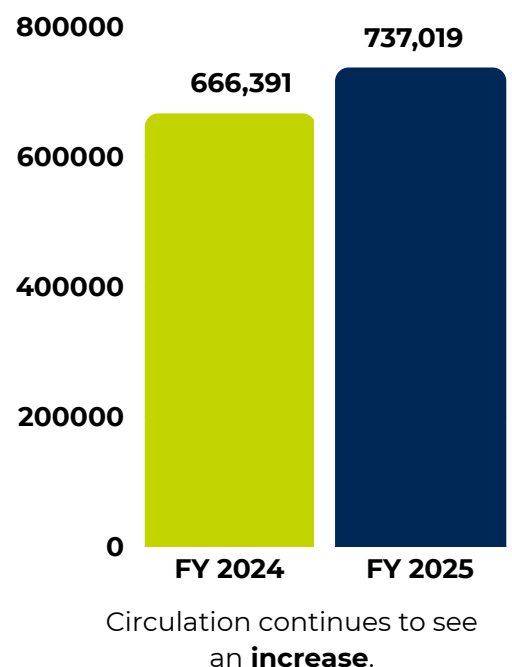


TOTAL CARDHOLDERS

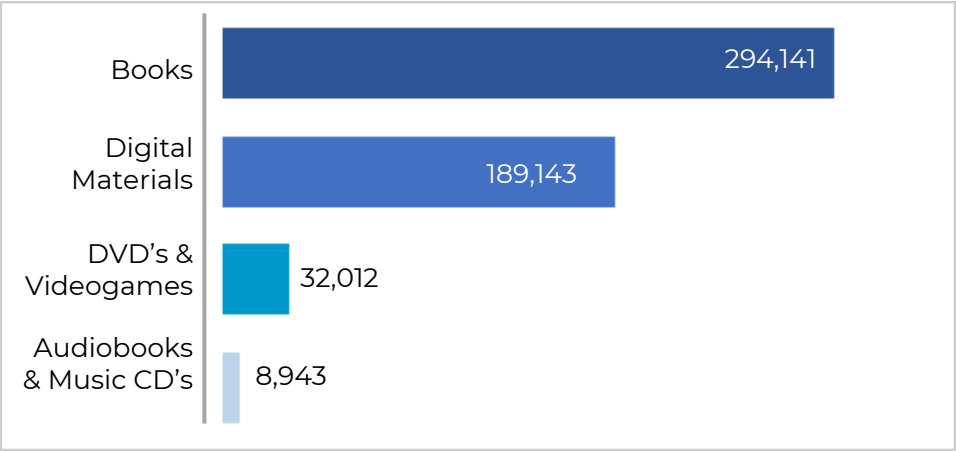
94,771 of **156,925** county residents are library cardholders.



TOTAL CIRCULATION

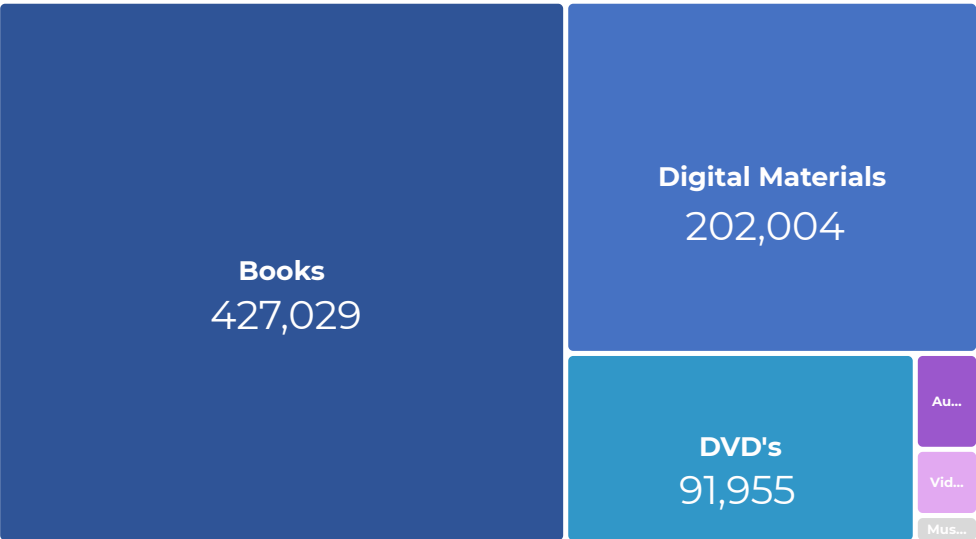


LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

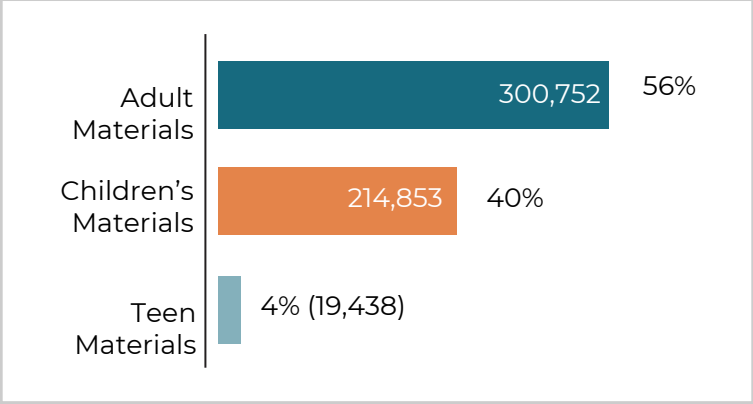


CIRCULATION BY FORMAT

- Books
- Digital Materials
- DVD's
- Audiobooks
- Videogames
- Music CD's

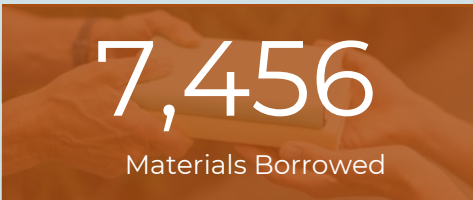


PHYSICAL MATERIALS CIRCULATED BY TYPE



INTERLIBRARY LOAN

Interlibrary Loan allows Washington County community members to access materials available in libraries throughout Maryland and beyond.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

Patrons enjoyed expanded access to a wide range of digital resources, including Blackstone Unlimited, Libby (OverDrive), Hoopla, Kanopy, and Comics Plus. These platforms provide convenient, 24/7 access to audiobooks, eBooks, movies, music, and comics, allowing users to explore and enjoy the library's collection anytime, anywhere. This continued investment in digital services supports lifelong learning, entertainment, and accessibility for all members of our community.



ACCESS & ACCESSIBILITY

Washington County Free Library is dedicated to providing life-changing services and resources to all members of the community. Building on the success of our North Pointe smart locker system, FY25 saw expansion with the installation of an additional smart locker system at the South Pointe Shopping Center and the introduction of automatic renewals. Smart locker checkouts nearly doubled, increasing from 5,140 to over 10,152. Automatic renewals have made borrowing easier and more convenient for our users, reducing late fees, saving staff time, and allowing patrons to keep their items longer without worrying about due dates.

In an effort to close the digital divide and increase digital literacy across Washington County, the Washington County Free Library distributed no-cost Chromebooks to local households through a grant provided by the Washington County Government via the Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development. In FY25, the program concluded with a total of 5,250 Chromebooks distributed across every jurisdiction in the county.



Library Stories

A patron told staff member, Terry, how grateful he is for our library. He stated, "You guys are great. You and the Y saved my life!" Comments like these help staff feel valued and appreciated. It's a powerful reminder that the services provided by the library and its team have a real, meaningful impact on people's lives.

ACCESS TO INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

According to the 2020 Census, approximately 18% of households in Washington County do not have a home internet connection. WCFL branches have 88 public computers, in addition to printers, scanners, and more to help lessen the digital divide in Washington County.

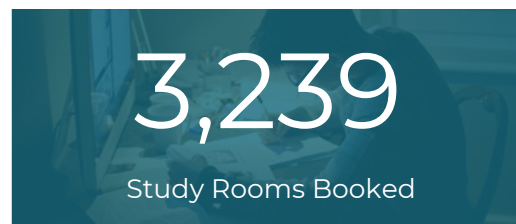


EQUITABLE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The Washington County Free Library helps ensure equitable access to government services by offering passport application services, as well as providing a secure voting drop box. By bringing these essential civic resources into the library, community members—including those who may face transportation, financial, or accessibility barriers—can more easily participate in travel, elections, and other important aspects of civic life. These services reinforce the library's role as a trusted, accessible hub for information and community engagement.

MEETING ROOMS & STUDY SPACES

The Library's meeting and study rooms continue to serve as valuable resources for the community. Meeting rooms accommodate organizations, businesses, and civic groups, while study spaces offer individuals a quiet, private environment for work and collaboration. In the past year, library spaces hosted test proctoring, strategic planning sessions, tenant association meetings, public information sessions, team-building workshops, homeschool co-ops, interviews, and more.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Library staff work hard to meet a wide range of information needs for all community members quickly, efficiently, and compassionately. This year, staff answered 41,346 questions. That's 113 questions per day! Community members visited WCFL's 20 premium digital services for accurate, trusted database results a total of 174,156 times, along with having access to an additional 12 state-sponsored and 14 non-paid digital resources.

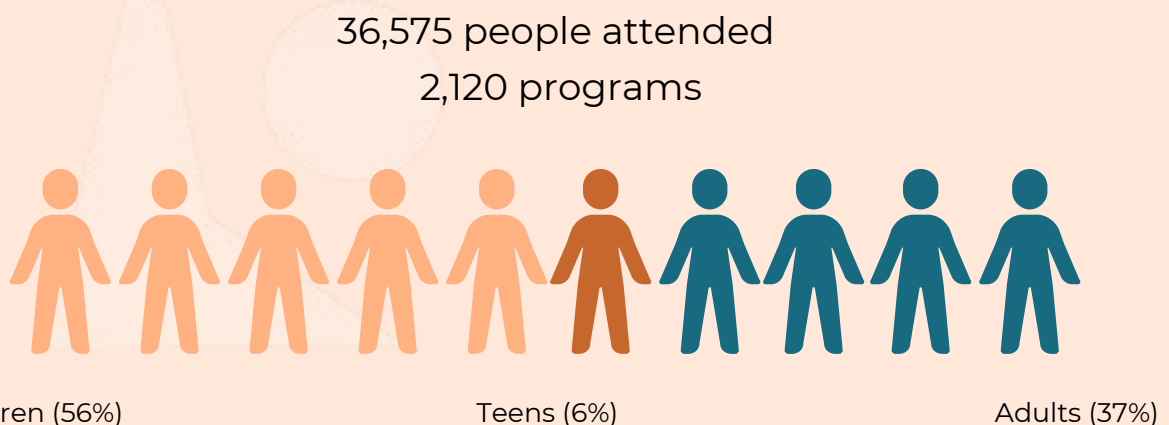




PROGRAMS

The Washington County Free Library offers programming for all age groups. In FY25, WCFL continued to see an increase in adult program attendance. Staff members worked dilligently to offer engaging programs to meet the community's needs, scheduling them at convenient times and locations, to make participation easier for everyone. From job fairs to financial literacy workshops, from cheesemaking to clothing repair classes, and from escape rooms to genealogy research, we partner with community leaders to deliver new, relevant programs while continuing our longstanding successes.

The Library's Annual Fairytale Costume Gala supports these initiatives while raising awareness of library services and providing the community with an enchanting evening to explore the library transformed into a mystical realm of magical creatures, sorcery, and fantastical adventures. The event was sold out, and we look forward to reimagining it once again in the coming year.





Library Stories

A woman from Togo in West Africa, a French-speaking country, came to the department for assistance with a form, and a sign to create and print for her business. A staff member who speaks French worked with her, and together, they were able to get everything accomplished. She left a satisfied customer after giving the staff member a hug in thanks!

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

WCFL has focused resources to help foster caregiver engagement and support childcare providers in early childhood learning.

Storytimes featuring crafts, songs, and activities create fun opportunities for children and caregivers to connect and participate together. Kids and teens discovered their love of reading through book clubs and writing contests, and their curiosity for STEM through hands-on experiments and building challenges.

ENHANCING EDUCATION

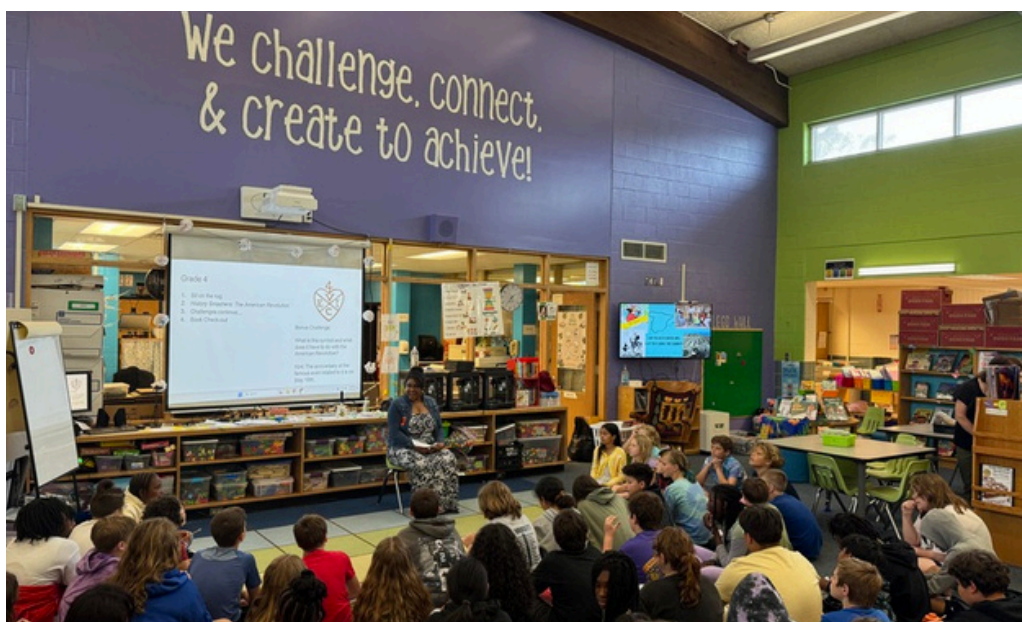
From book giveaways and author visits to hands-on maker activities, students of all ages can discover new interests and build their skills. Library staff are ready to help with homework and research for K-12 students and beyond.

Many WCPS middle and high school classes visited their local libraries for tours and to learn about resources accessible with their RAIL (Raising Access to Improve Literacy) student library cards.



Library Stories

In January, a community member called the desk and signed up for five programs at once; she hasn't attended any in the past but told staff she's so excited to bring her friend along to make truffles, learn about cheese, and more! She couldn't get over the variety of offerings and shared how impressed she was that we are not only providing fun and educational events, but ones that meet the needs of under-served populations in the community like the monthly Storytime for All Abilities.



WCFL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

History Around the County

Washington County is full of cultural and historic significance. Branch libraries support their community's excitement for history by regularly creating programs featuring local historians and authors like *The Victory Gardens: Food in Hard Times* program that included extensive information about wartime gardens and even had historically accurate snacks to sample. Smithsburg library has success with their geneology research programs and their *Great Scientist* series for children.

Symphony Storytimes

WCFL presented musical storytimes, where a captivating book is paired with a fresh musical score performed by a Maryland Symphony Orchestra musician to create an unforgettable experience for all ages!

Hagerstown Homesteaders

Hagerstown Homesteaders, a very well-attended monthly gardening club, continues to grow, including an off-shoot teaching kids these important skills. From how to lay out garden plots, start seeds, and naturally control pests, to harvesting and canning, this club helps to prepare people for sustainable and healthy living.

Storytimes Around Town

Taking storytimes beyond the library's walls and into the community helps reach people where they are. The Williamsport Memorial Library hosted storytimes in the park, at a pizza parlor, a plant shop, the farmers market, and more—making it easier than ever for families to participate.



WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

WCFL supports job seekers, entrepreneurs, and business owners through life skills workshops, financial and digital literacy classes, individualized job search assistance, and community partnerships that foster professional development and collaboration.

The Library fosters an interconnected community by incorporating multicultural and diverse perspectives into its programming, extending outreach to historically underserved populations, and partnering with organizations to build stronger community connections.



Library Stories

A woman who came into the Mystical Tea Party program said she came by herself, but she made three new friends just by putting herself out there! She thanked the library for creating events to bring the community together!



RESPONDING TO THE COMMUNITY

The Washington County Free Library strives to anticipate and respond to the community's evolving aspirations and needs, both current and future. We collect and analyze attendance data to guide the growth of our programs and services, ensuring they continue to reflect the interests and priorities of the communities we serve.

Bookmobiles build community engagement by serving as mobile community hubs. The Washington County Free Library continues its long-standing bookmobile legacy of meeting people where they are, by operating two modern vehicles that make an average of 60 stops each month. The newer, more compact bookmobile primarily visits community centers, retirement and adult-living communities, and senior centers, while the larger bookmobile bus serves schools, daycares, and summer camps.



Library Stories

A regular Hagerstown Homesteaders attendee contacted Terry, the staff member leading the series. The patron normally comes to the Saturday classes and asked if she could switch to the Friday class; she also asked for the Friday program time. "Whew! That leaves me enough time to come to class and still catch my 5:00 flight!" Terry asked, "What? You're coming to class and leaving directly for the airport?" The patron said she did not want to miss a single Homesteader class!



WCFL

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Homeschool Book Club

WCFL engages our large and growing homeschool community by having resources throughout our locations, from homeschool and science kits, to learning and book clubs that meet regularly with devoted attendees in locations like Sharpsburg, Williamsport, Hancock, and Hagerstown.

Community Baby Showers

In collaboration with the Washington County Health Department, WCFL hosted 3 Community Baby Showers in Clear Spring, Hancock, and Williamsport. Expectant mothers played games, entered raffles, received important information on child rearing and safety, and left with diaper bags of useful goodies!

Writing & Design Contests

The library received 222 entries into the annual Writers and Poets Contest with triple the adult entries of last year! Author, Cerece Rennie Murphy, made a special visit! Contests like these showcase the talent and creativity of Washington County residents of all ages!

Summer Reading Club

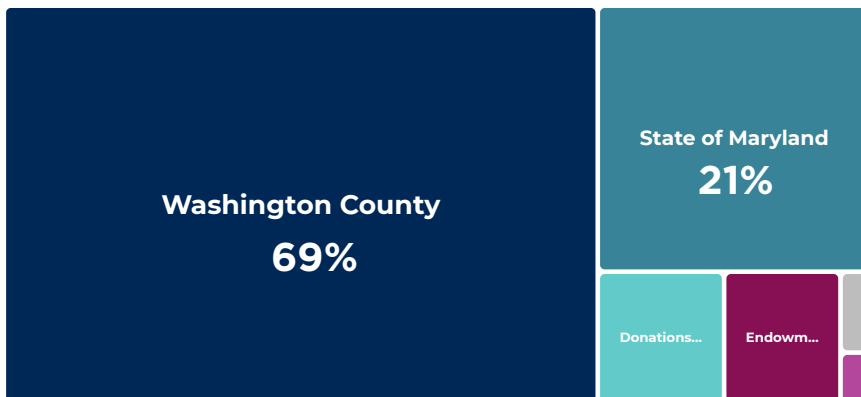
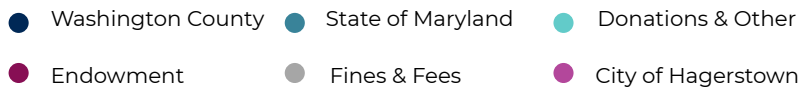
Summer Reading Club helps prevent "summer slide" for students with a balance of self-paced reading goals and educational, fun, and enriching programs. Over 4,000 community members participated and we were honored to "Color Our World" with them for this year's theme! Events were held throughout all 8 locations and travelled with our two bookmobile's.



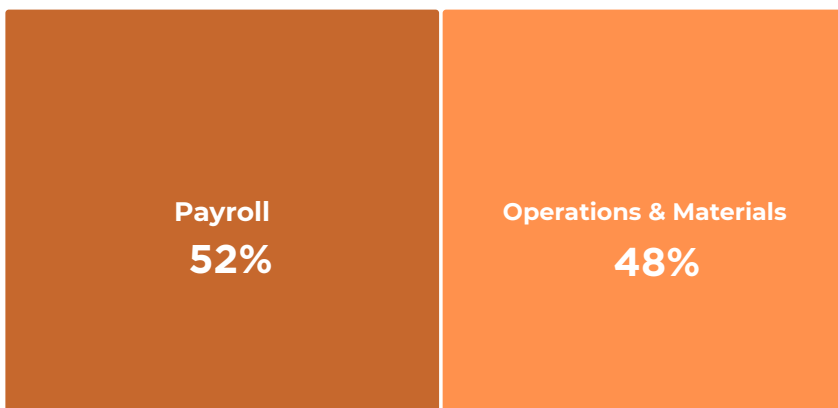
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

TOTAL BUDGET: \$7,893,745.04

REVENUE



EXPENDITURES



Staff Breakdown by Position FY25

WCFL Personnel (Total FTE): 64

14 Professional Librarians

These positions require a **Master's Degree** from an American Library Association accredited college or university and a Professional Librarian Certificate from the State of Maryland, along with the completion of continuing education credits on an annual basis.

4 FT | 1 PT

Professional Support Staff

These positions require either a **Bachelor's Degree** or a **Master's Degree** in a specialized field relating to either Information Technology or Finance.

14 FT | 21 PT

Library Associates

These positions require a **Bachelor's Degree** and the completion of a **LATI** (Library Associates Training Institute) certification, along with the completion of continuing education credits on an annual basis.

17 FT | 23 PT

Library Assistants

1 FT | 2 PT

Security Officers

2 FT Maintenance Workers

2 PT Custodians

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Investing in the well-being of your community pays dividends. When you invest in your public library system, those dollars are put toward educational infrastructure, economic development, cultivating connections, and beyond.

The personal stories shared by Washington County residents who use the library, the quantitative data gathered throughout FY25, and the below Estimated Value of Library Services chart offer a snapshot of Washington County Free Library's impact.

Estimated Value of Library Services			
Quantity	Service	Retail Value*	Value
7,456	Materials Borrowed via Interlibrary Loan	\$26.00	\$193,856.00
427,029	Books and Print Materials Borrowed	\$23.00	\$9,821,667.00
107,986	DVDs and Other Media Borrowed	\$21.00	\$2,267,706.00
202,004	Digital Materials Downloaded	\$28.00	\$5,656,112.00
41,346	One-on-One Research	\$21.00	\$868,266.00
103	Tech Assistance	\$40.00	\$4,120.00
22,677	Children and Teens Programs Attendees	\$16.00	\$362,832.00
13,533	Adult Programs Attendees	\$19.00	\$257,127.00
174,156	Premium Digital Resource Searches	\$15.00	\$2,612,340.00
59,478	Computer and Wi-Fi Hours	\$19.00	\$1,130,082.00
3,239	Study Room Use	\$51.00	\$165,189.00
296	Community Meeting Room Use	\$256.00	\$75,776.00
Total: \$23,415,073.00			

*Retail Value based on estimates

For every \$1 Washington County spent on library services, the community received approximately \$6.75 worth in services.

AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

A Library of Things expands access to learning, creativity, and innovation by offering community members the opportunity to borrow tools, technology, and other nontraditional items. From crafting kits and STEM resources to household tools and recreational equipment, this collection empowers patrons to explore new skills and experiences without financial barriers. Looking ahead, the Washington County Free Library anticipates launching its Library of Things in Spring 2026. This initiative will continue to grow and adapt to community interests, fostering sustainability, discovery, and shared resources for years to come.

PARTNERSHIPS

Washington County Free Library is generously supported by elected officials at the city, county, and state levels. The Library thanks Washington County, the City of Hagerstown, and the many community organizations that provide support for our classes, workshops, special programs, and activities throughout the year.

- Adkins Mini Golf
- Adventures in Fun Reptile Show
- Antietam Institute
- Antietam National Battlefield
- Antietam Pumpkins
- April Frusher-Boyle
- Appalachian Reptiles & Aquatics
- Authentic Community Theatre
- Backstage Library Works
- Baker Creek Seed Co.
- Baltimore Orioles
- Barbara Ingram School for the Arts
- Barbara Irvine Collection Exhibit
- Beginnings Daycare
- Bester Community of Hope
- Betty's Wish
- Beyond Comics in Frederick
- Black Storytellers of Western Maryland
- Blue Ridge Risk Partners, LLC
- Boonsboro Green Fest's Zero Waste Exchange
- Boonsboro Historical Society
- Boonsborough Museum of History
- Botanical Interests
- Boys and Girls Club of Washington County
- Brethren Mutual Insurance Company
- Bright Beginnings Child Care
- Brooke's House
- Buzz Worthy Apiary
- Chamber of Commerce President, Paul Frey
- 2nd & Charles
- Chick-fil-a
- Children in Need
- CISCO
- City Councilpersons, Peter Perini and Matt Schindler
- City of Hagerstown
- Commonwealth Senior Living
- Community Action Council
- Conococheague Institute
- Create-a-candle
- Dairy Queen
- DeafNet, Inc.
- Dementia Friendly Washington County
- Discovery Station
- Distillery Lane Ciderworks
- Denny's
- Department of Agriculture
- Didgeridoo Down Under
- D.M Bowman
- Dollar General
- DOT Foods
- Dr. Tom Clemens
- Eastern Elementary School
- Elias Davison Homestead
- First United Bank and Trust
- The Flying Boxcars at Meritus Park
- Food Lion
- For Jars, Co.
- Fort Ritchie Community Center
- Fort Ritchie Museum
- Frederick Keys
- Friends of the Library
- Fun and Learning Center
- Gaye McGovern State Farm Insurance
- Gimli the Dwelf Cat
- Good Shepherd Preschool
- Grandma's House, LLC
- Greenbrier Elementary School
- Greenlawn Cemetery
- Hadley Farms Bakery
- Hagerstown Aviation Museum
- Hagerstown Chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild
- Hagerstown Children's School
- Hagerstown City Park
- Hagerstown Community College
- Hagerstown Mayor, Bill McIntire
- Hancock Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- Hancock Lion's Club
- Hancock Senior Center
- Head Start of Washington County
- Healthy Washington County
- Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area
- Herald-Mail Media
- High Mowing Seeds
- Homewood Retirement Center
- Hope Through Birth
- Horizon Goodwill
- Hospice of Washington County
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Interfaith Service Coalition
- International House of Pancakes
- Johnny's Seeds
- Jone L. Bowman Family Foundation
- Judy Center of Washington County
- Katherine and Kent Oliver
- Kinder Haven Preschool
- Kiwanis of Hagerstown
- Krispy Kreme
- Labor of Love
- Leadership Washington County
- Leonard P. Snyder Fund
- Literacy Council of Washington County
- Little Brick Coffee in Sharpsburg
- Little Jack's Preschool
- Live 96.7
- Loaves and Fishes
- Main St. Williamsport businesses
- Marshall Street School
- Martha's House
- Martin's Foods
- Maryland 529
- Maryland Coalition of Families
- Maryland Department of Health
- Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Film Office Director Jack Gerbes
- Maryland Humanities
- Maryland Science Center
- Maryland State Department of Education
- Maryland State Library Resource Center
- Maryland Symphony Orchestra
- Master Gardeners of Washington County
- Meritus
- Middletown Valley Bank
- Misty Meadows Farm Creamery
- Mr. Jon and Friends
- Neptune's Harvest
- The Nora Roberts Family Foundation
- On Stage Dance Performance
- Patricia Hammond
- Pitter Patter Playhouse
- PNC Bank
- Point Broadband
- Poole Law Group
- Potomac Valley Audubon Society

- Power House Studios
- Priority Partners
- Quarto Conservation of Books & Paper, Inc.
- Reading to Make Cents Committee
- Ready, Set, Play
- Rehoboth United Methodist Church
- Restoration Seeds
- Rooster Vane Gardens
- Royal Tea Boba & Sweets
- Science in the Library
- Sharpsburg Historical Society
- Sharpsburg Museum of History
- Sheetz, Inc.
- Sheehy, Hagerstown
- Sila Bartel
- Smith's Karate
- Smithsburg Advisory Board members
- Smithsburg EMS
- Smithsburg Historical Society
- Smithsburg Police Station
- Smithsburg Post Office
- Smithsburg Volunteer Fire Department
- Sow Right Seeds
- Sprout: Plants & Things
- St Paul's Episcopal Church
- STAR Community of Hope
- Star Theater
- State Library Resource Center (SLRC)
- Stone Werks Coffee + Sweets
- Stryker (the Flying Boxcars mascot)
- SueChefs
- Sunny Meadows Garden Center
- Texas Roadhouse
- The Greater Hagerstown Committee
- The Mama Coach
- The National Aquarium
- The Science Guys
- Thin Line Service Dogs
- Tony's Pizza Williamsport
- Town of Boonsboro
- Town of Burkittsville
- Town of Clear Spring
- Town of Hancock
- Town of Keedysville
- Town of Sharpsburg
- Town of Smithsburg
- Town of Williamsport
- Tree Trekkers
- TriState Astronomers
- United Way

- University of Maryland Extension Office-Marylanders Online
- University System of Maryland at Hagerstown
- University of Maryland 4H
- U.S National Park Service
- U.S Postal Service
- Village Cheesemakers
- Vince's Pizza Smithsburg
- Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area
- Visit Hagerstown
- Volvo Group Trucks
- Waffle House
- Warehouse Cinemas
- Washington County Agricultural Center
- Washington County Arts Council
- Washington County Board of Elections
- Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- Washington County Commission on Aging, Inc.
- Washington County Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Washington County Family Center
- Washington County Health Department
- Washington County Historical Society
- Washington County Homeless Coalition
- Washington County Master Gardeners
- Washington County Museum of Fine Arts
- Washington County Public Schools
- Washington County Public Schools Meal Machine
- Washington County Reads
- WDVM
- Wendy's
- Western Maryland Consortium
- Weis Markets
- Western Maryland Regional Library
- William Brish Planetarium
- WJEJ 1240 AM
- Writer and Director, Eduardo Sanchez
- YMCA



NOTABLE PARTNERSHIPS THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

- Thanks to grant funding through the Washington County Health Department, WCFL can empower people with a harm reduction vending machine that includes doses of Narcan, safe disposal kits for medications, hygiene kits, gun locks, and medication safe storage devices.
- A total of 23,307 WCPS students have RAIL (Raising Access to Improve Literacy) library accounts, which allow them to check out materials and use library computers—continuing a strong partnership between the Washington County Free Library and Washington County Public Schools to support student learning and literacy development.
- WCFL was honored to be a STAR Community Advocate of the Month for staff member, Yesenia Navarro-Garcia's, Storytime for All Abilities program. She went on to receive the STAR Community Advocate of the Year Award for her innovation and dedication!



WASHINGTON COUNTY FREE LIBRARY

Where People & Possibilities Meet

Boonsboro



Clear Spring



Hancock



Keedysville



Hagerstown



Sharpsburg



Smithsburg



Bookmobile



Williamsport



HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY LIBRARY?

washcolibrary.org/support

Join the Friends of the Library!

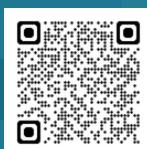
Join a group of library lovers who fundraise, advocate, and volunteer their time to support free library programs! Membership is just \$5 a year.

Speak Up!

Advocate for your library locally, at the state level, and at the federal level. Let your elected officials know why public libraries matter to you.

Donate!

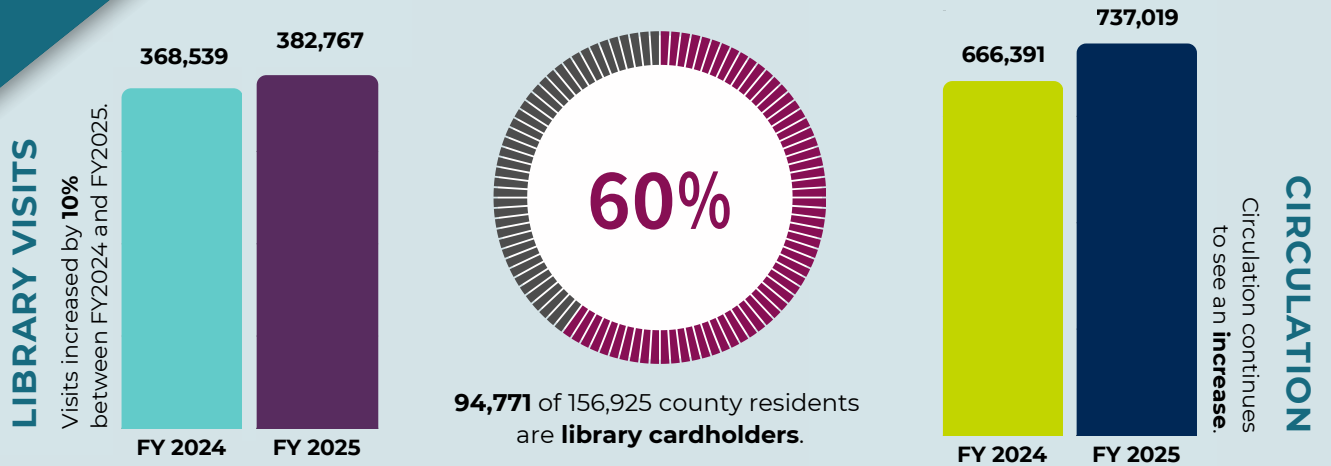
Financially support your library to help further our mission, purchase materials, offer free educational and cultural programming, and more.





at a glance

TOTAL LIBRARY USE



Residents visited our **8 libraries** and **2 bookmobile's** over **382,000 times!**

525,140
Physical
Materials

+

203,604
Digital
Offerings

=

Something for
EVERYONE

This year, staff answered **41,346** questions. That's **113 questions per day!**

FY
25

43,118
Computer & Wi-Fi
Sessions

14,374
Interlibrary Loan Total
Materials

**Smart locker
checkouts** nearly
doubled—from
5,140 to **over 10,152**



For every **\$1 Washington County** spent on library services, the community received approximately **\$6.75 worth in services**.

296
Meetings Hosted

3,239
Study Rooms Booked

TOTAL BUDGET: \$7,893,745.04

Washington County - 69% State of Maryland - 21% Donations & Other - 5%
Endowment - 4% Fines & Fees - 0.7% City of Hagerstown - 0.4%

36,575 people attended
2,120 programs



Children — 56%
Teens — 6%
Adults — 37%