



 COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN LIBRARY

# 2024

## Financial Summary



April 2024

**To the Citizens of the City of Columbus and Franklin County,  
The Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer of Columbus Metropolitan Library**

As Fiscal Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML), I am pleased to present CML's 2024 Financial Summary, a summary of the 2024 Budget as approved by the Board of Trustees (Board). This report is intended to summarize CML's financial activities and highlight its programs, services and initiatives. This summary has been developed with the participation and cooperation of CML's administrative and executive leadership staff. This report is unaudited and presented on a non-GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) basis. CML's current audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is located on CML's website, [columbuslibrary.org](http://columbuslibrary.org).

CML remains dedicated to serving the needs of the community and is committed to adapting to provide essential programs and services. CML provides robust programs, resources, social service assistance, job and career help and adult education. The disruption the pandemic caused to school and other learning environments are long-lasting and negatively impacted children's literacy skills and development. CML expanded our ongoing school outreach efforts by deploying School Reading Assistants to school buildings in several school districts to help address academic losses caused by the pandemic. This report provides details on the School Reading Assistants and all the programs and services CML offers.

CML's vision is "a thriving community where wisdom prevails," and the 2024 budget (January 1 – December 31) supports purposeful investments in CML's three external strategies: Young Minds, My Library and Life Skills. These strategies are acutely relevant for what is needed now in the communities CML serves. The 2024 budget will afford CML the capacity to continue to adapt its programmatic investments in these strategies and in CML's commitment to community recovery.

CML follows a strategy of fiscal sustainability. This fiscally prudent approach places CML in a strong financial position and allows CML to continue to invest in our customers through mission-critical programs, services and facilities. CML will work diligently to generate the greatest impact and largest return from every dollar of public investment.

The CML Financial Planning and Analysis team has made every effort to provide the most relevant 2024 budget information in a clear and concise format. If you have any questions about this document, please contact Jamie Lang, Director of Financial Planning and Procurement, at (614) 849-1062 or send an email to [jiang@columbuslibrary.org](mailto:jiang@columbuslibrary.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Hagan  
Chief Financial Officer/Fiscal Officer

# OUR VISION

A thriving community where wisdom prevails.

# OUR PURPOSE

To inspire reading, share resources and connect people.

Circulation | **13.1 million**

User Visits | **4.9 million**

Cardholders | **615,000**

Kids Cards Issued | **29,000**

Computer & Wireless Sessions | **2.5 million**

Web Visits | **9.3 million**

eContent Use | **3.8 million**

Social Media Followers | **136,000**

## HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED

### SCHOOL HELP

**76,400** visits from K-12 students who sought help with schoolwork and reading practice.

### READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

**145,000** children and caregivers attended Storytimes, classes and camps to get better prepared for school.

### SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

**48,100** kids, teens and adults read over the summer to keep skills sharp.

### AFTER-SCHOOL SNACK AND SUMMER LUNCH

**107,000** children received a free summer lunch or after-school snack.

## SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE

### JOB HELP

**12,100** connections made to resources and services, in partnership with local and national organizations, to help our customers become part of our local workforce.

**23**

Locations in Franklin County



**17**

Central Ohio library systems sharing books and materials



**10**

Public School Districts Served



**32**

Schools receiving our Book Delivery Service

- 600 Classrooms
- 70,400 Books



## ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

CML is a county district library with boundaries including all the land area within Franklin County, Ohio, except for the land area lying within the boundaries of six other public library districts in the County. CML was formed in 1872, and the Public Library and Reading Room opened on March 4, 1873 at the New City Hall. CML has since expanded to 22 branches and Main Library. In 2023, CML celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday and celebrated this milestone anniversary with customer programs and community events all year long.

CML is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas and the Franklin County Commissioners. The Board of Trustees is the policy-making body for the institution and is responsible for approving strategic direction, short/long term budgets and financial direction. CML is a political subdivision as defined by the Ohio Revised Code, and therefore financially and operationally independent from the City of Columbus and Franklin County.

## VISION AND PURPOSE

CML’s vision is “a thriving community where wisdom prevails”, and the 2024 calendar year budget supports purposeful investments in CML’s three external strategies: Young Minds, My Library and Life Skills. Each year, CML sets goals and objectives to support these strategies. The budget supports the needs of our customers by providing a diverse and popular collection of library materials and access to resources such as computers, wireless internet and community spaces. This budget will afford CML the capacity to respond to areas of great need such as:

Preparing Children for Kindergarten	Third-Grade Reading Proficiency	High School Graduation Rates	College and Career Readiness and Employment Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready for Kindergarten Classes</li> <li>• Ready for Kindergarten Storytime</li> <li>• Play to Learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Buddies</li> <li>• Summer Reading Challenge</li> <li>• Winter Reading Challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Help Centers</li> <li>• HelpNow</li> <li>• YouMedia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JobNow</li> <li>• Reserve an Expert</li> <li>• Business &amp; Nonprofit Resource Center</li> </ul>

CML’s purpose is to “inspire reading, share resources and connect people”. Libraries are public spaces valued and used by individuals and organizations for access to information, print and digital reading materials, meeting space, technology and numerous other resources. CML has made significant commitments to replace or renovate aging, high-maintenance and inefficient buildings. CML is building libraries that will not only stand the test of time but will evolve with the ever-changing world in which we live. CML’s long-term facilities plan, 2020 Vision Plan, is discussed in more detail on page 9.



*Left:* student working in the School Help Center at the Barnett Branch

*Right:* children getting creative with the magnetic ball run at Driving Park Branch during Play to Learn

# OPEN TO ALL

## LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES<sup>1</sup>

CML's collection contains 2.4 million items: 1.8 million physical items including books, music CDs, DVDs, magazines, maps and sheet music and over 600,000 digital items such as eBooks, eAudiobooks, audiobooks,. As part of a continued focus on collection diversity, the collection contains adult and children's materials in over 25 languages including Spanish, French, Somali, Amharic and Gujarati.

CML is a member of the Central Library Consortium (CLC), consisting of 17 library systems throughout central Ohio. As a member of CLC, CML shares an online catalog and select online resources with 16 other systems to offer customers a collection of over 5 million items with over 1 million unique titles.

Public computers at all library locations provide access to the internet, Microsoft Office products and a wealth of online databases. Digital library resources remain available 24/7 at CML's website, [columbuslibrary.org](http://columbuslibrary.org). Resources include eContent plus research, learning tools, virtual services and the catalog. CML's eContent and Research page on CML's website allow you to download and stream your favorite content and access digital resources anytime, anywhere. Below is a sample of digital library resources available.

## DIGITAL RESOURCES<sup>2</sup>

eContent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• eBooks</li><li>• eAudiobooks</li><li>• Digital Magazines</li></ul>
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ancestry</li><li>• Business Source Premier</li><li>• Columbus African American Collection</li></ul>
Learning Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mango Languages</li><li>• World Book Early Learning</li></ul>
Virtual Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NewsBank</li><li>• HelpNow</li></ul>
Catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Electronic Resources</li><li>• Overdrive</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup>Programs and services are free with a library card.

<sup>2</sup>Digital Resources list is not complete, full list of resources available on CML's website.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO AT CML

Check out books, eBooks, eAudiobooks, CDs, DVDs and stream movies, music TV shows

Reserve items online and pick up at any location

Use public computers

Access Wi-Fi

Reserve meeting rooms to gather

Access tools and resources to learn new skills or get information

Get help with technology and job skills

Explore genealogy and local history with our experts at Main Library

Attend programs and special events

Access resources for businesses and nonprofit organizations at Main Library

# OPEN TO ALL

## LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES<sup>1</sup> CONTINUED

CML offers programs and services for customers of all ages with a focus on children and teens. The programs below illustrate CML's commitment to Young Minds, CML's number one strategy. The Kids & Teens page on CML's website offers valuable content.

### WE HELP CHILDREN SUCCEED

<b>Ready for Kindergarten Storytime<sup>2</sup></b>	Helping parents and caregivers be their child's first teacher	<b>Reading Buddies<sup>2</sup></b>	Helping K-3 students with reading skills
<b>Ready for Kindergarten Classes<sup>2</sup></b>	Helping children and families get ready for kindergarten through hands-on practice	<b>School Help</b>	Assisting K-12 students with schoolwork and reading practice
<b>Kindergarten Success Camp</b>	Helping 5-year-olds and their parents gain skills and experience before entering school	<b>School Delivery</b>	Providing students regular access to high-interest books at select elementary schools
<b>Play to Learn</b>	Helping children be better prepared for school both academically and socially through hands-on activities and child led playtime	<b>YouMedia</b>	Helping teens acquire and develop skills in animation, music composition and digital art

<sup>1</sup>Programs and services are free with a library card.

<sup>2</sup>Program offered virtually and in-person.

**CML is committed to Life Skills**, an organizational strategy, offering programs and services to prepare adults for work and life. In partnership with community partners, CML provides Workforce Development, Social Services, Adult Education and Digital Inclusion. CML continues to review the programs and resources available to ensure we are meeting the community's needs. The Adults page on CML's website includes the full list of job and career help, social services and resources available through the Business and Nonprofit Resource Center.

Follow CML on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#)) and check [columbuslibrary.org](http://columbuslibrary.org) for updates and a list of current library services and programs.



*Left:* English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class at Whitehall Branch.  
*Right:* students writing songs and recording music in the YouMedia center at Main Library.

# 2024 Operating Budget

## Revenue and Expenditures

The table below provides a summary of the revenue and expenditure budget for CML’s General Fund, the library’s general operating fund. The General Fund is used to account for all revenue, except those required to be accounted for in another fund, and all operating expenditures. Library expenditures include funding for facility and technology projects, staffing, library materials, programs and services and replacement of furniture and equipment.

The annual budget serves as the foundation for financial planning, performance monitoring, decision making, and control of expenditures. In 2024, CML’s General Fund revenue (\$120M) exceeds the General Fund expenditures (\$86M). For government organizations with a tax levy, it is not unusual to see revenue exceed expenditures in the first several years of the levy allowing the general fund balance to grow. In the second half of the levy cycle, expenditures typically exceed revenue, and the fund balance is drawn down.

CML’s general property tax revenue is provided from a 2.8 mill and 1.5 mill continuing property tax levies approved by Franklin County voters in 2010 and 2023. Property tax revenue does not increase at the same rate as property valuation. In accordance with House Bill 920, as property valuations increase during countywide property reappraisals, the voted millage is reduced to generate the same amount of tax revenue as was received when the levy was approved by the voters. Therefore, CML’s current effective mill rates are 1.63 mills and 1.12.

Public Library Fund (PLF) revenue is received from the State of Ohio’s Public Library Fund. The Public Library Fund is funded with 1.70% of the State’s General Revenue Fund tax revenue and divided among Ohio’s public libraries.

## General Fund

Revenue (in thousands)	2024 Budget
General Property Tax	\$ 96,454
Public Library Fund (PLF)	\$ 28,200
PLF Debt Service Transfer <sup>1</sup>	\$ (7,334)
Net PLF Total	\$ 20,866
Customer Fees	\$ 200
Charges for Services	\$ 1,369
Investment Revenue	\$ 453
Miscellaneous	\$ 272
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 119,615</b>

Expenditures (in thousands)	2024 Budget
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 56,853
Operational Services	\$ 14,522
Library Materials	\$ 8,489
Capital Outlay	\$ 2,210
Supplies	\$ 2,172
Other	\$ 1,450
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 85,696</b>

<sup>1</sup>Approximately 25% of PLF is used to support the Debt Service Fund annually



Left: children eager to learn in the Ready for Kindergarten class at Whetstone Branch

Right: teens gather to learn and have discussions in a YouMedia program at Whitehall Branch

# Debt Service Fund

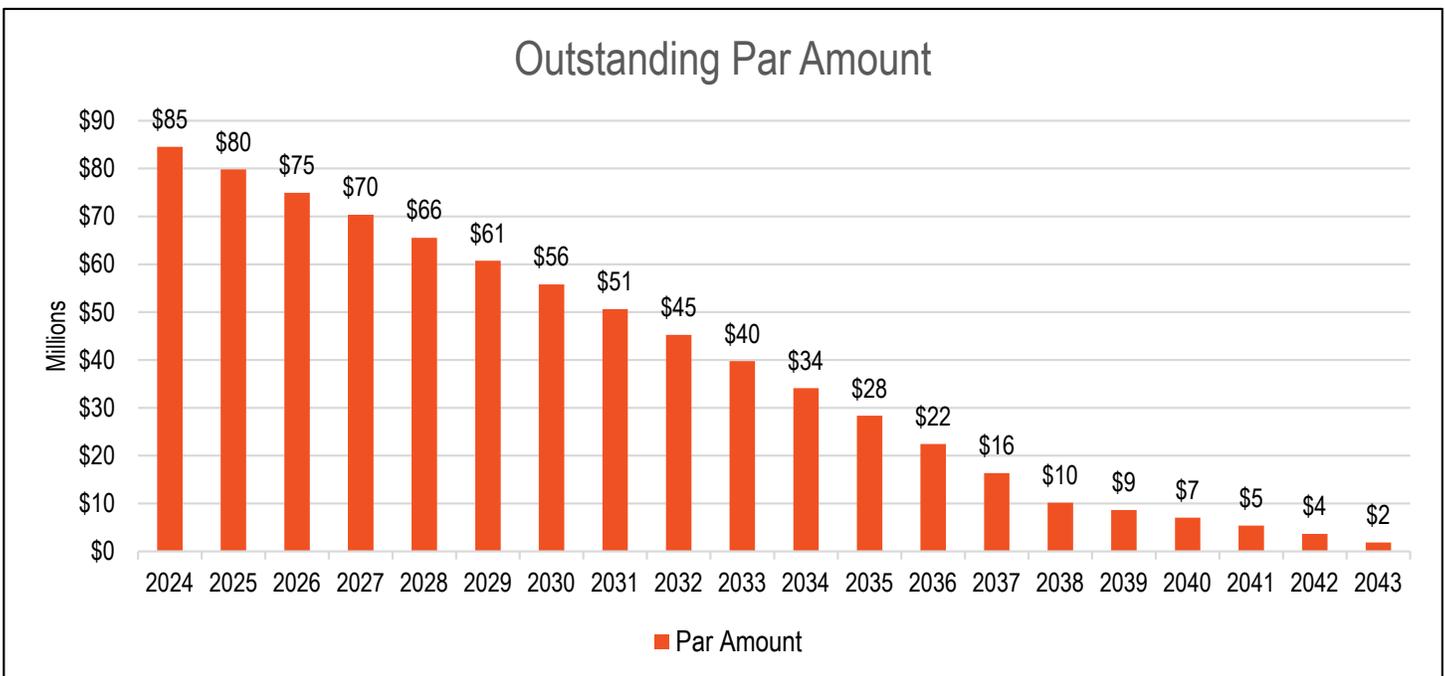
The Debt Service Fund provides for the retirement of the current year principal and interest on CML's long-term debt obligations and payment of any trustee fees associated with administration of the debt.

## Columbus Metropolitan Library's Debt

CML had \$85 million in debt outstanding as of January 1, 2024, the majority of which is related to the 2019 and 2020 Public Library Fund (PLF) Notes. The PLF Notes are special obligations and secured by a pledge of CML's allocation from the Public Library Fund and reach maturity in 2025, 2027, 2037 and 2043. CML's outstanding debt is currently rated Aa1 by Moody's Investors Service (Moody's). In 2023, Moody's upgraded CML's debt rating from a Aa2 to Aa1 citing CML's strong financial management and stable management team as underlying reasons for the upgrade.

In 2012, CML issued \$92 million of PLF Notes to fund a portion of the 2020 Vision Plan\* Phase I projects. CML issued \$33 million of Public Library Notes in 2019 to fund a portion of the 2020 Vision Plan Phase II projects. CML also issued Public Library Fund Refunding Notes, which represent debt issued to refinance previous debt at a lower interest rate. CML saves money by reducing payments over the term of the debt.

CML refinanced a portion of the Series 2012 PLF Notes in 2016 and 2017 and refinanced the remainder in 2020. By refinancing, CML achieved nearly \$13 million in net present value savings on the three series of refunded notes. PLF monies are received annually in the Debt Service Fund to cover debt repayment. Detailed debt service schedules are included in CML's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report located on CML's website, [columbuslibrary.org](http://columbuslibrary.org).



\*The 2020 Vision Plan is discussed in more detail on page 9.



# 2020 Vision Plan

CML's long-term facilities plan, the 2020 Vision Plan, is aligned with CML's strategic plan, and a key focus of the strategic plan is My Library: Creating the Next Generation Library. The 2020 Vision Plan brings 21st century libraries to our communities, creating a library that works for the customer and the community. The 2020 Vision Plan is a multi-phased comprehensive blueprint that reinvents and revitalizes the entire 600,000 square feet maintained by CML. Projects are identified based on several criteria including, but not limited to, building age, building size, population served, growing needs of the community, and usage statistics. New or renovated facilities address space constraints, improved technology and the changing dynamics of the library service model.

Phase I of the 2020 Vision Plan included replacing or renovating nine branches and Main Library. Phase I concluded in 2019 when the Dublin Branch opened. Additional details on the Phase I projects and source of funding can be found on CML's website.

CML's Board approved the continuation of the 2020 Vision Plan in 2018. Phase II includes replacing or renovating eight branches. Phase II is funded through a combination of debt, operational savings, fundraising, and savings from refinancing debt at lower interest rates. Like Phase I, the Board approved long-term debt and CML issued \$33M Public Library Notes in 2019.

CML capital projects are traditionally approved by the Board as individual project budgets. The budgets for the 2020 Vision Plan are established and approved as components for each Phase. Establishing budgets by component provides more cross-project flexibility and allows for better management of variances across projects.

The project components are defined as:

- Program Budget: costs associated with pre-construction design services and construction management fees.
- Land Budget: costs associated with purchasing property, if applicable, site preparation fees and related legal fees.
- Construction Budget: costs associated with design and construction of a facility, including legal, permit and utility connection fees.
- Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment Budget: costs associated with contents of a building, including library materials, security system, technology and public art.

## 2020VP PROJECTS – PHASE I

CML completed Phase I of the aspirational building program with the opening of the Dublin Branch in 2019. Additional details on Phase I can be found on CML's website [here](#)

## 2020VP PROJECTS – PHASE II

- **Karl Road Branch:** opened 2021
- **Hilltop Branch:** opened 2021
- **Gahanna Branch:** opened March 2023
- **Reynoldsburg Branch:** the new building is expected to open April 2024
- **Marion Franklin Branch\*:** the new building is expected to open in 2025
- **Linden Branch\*:** the renovated building is expected to open in 2025
- **Barnett Branch\*:** the renovated building is expected to open in 2025
- **Canal Winchester\*:** the new building is expected to open in 2025

*\*Estimated, subject to change.*



Above: New Reynoldsburg Branch. The new two-level branch offers a reimagined Children's area, larger School Help Center, a large teen area, study rooms and meeting rooms.

# Operating Projects

## PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2023

In 2023, \$2.5 million was committed to facility improvements and technology projects. The following projects were completed:

- Installed new document management equipment at 10 locations which provides customers with self-service copy, scan and fax services. The new equipment provides a major improvement in the customer experience compared to the old equipment.
- Added in branch interpreting service to provide real time language support to provide on-demand interpretation to customers in 41 languages via video chat and many more languages over the phone.
- Installed solar panels on the roofs of select branches which will reduce utilities costs. Additional community benefits include the reduction of greenhouse gases and other pollution emissions.
- Opened a new Business and Nonprofit Resource Center at Main Library to connect the small business community and nonprofit organizations to the resources and information they need.
- Replaced more than 500 aging public computers at multiple branches.
- Completed enhancements at the Whitehall Branch and Driving Park Branch. Enhancements included adding a Business Center at each location and adding interactive elements in children's spaces that inspire reading, learning and having fun.
- Installed wireless in the Main Library parking garage enhancing safety and security for both customers and staff.
- Added interactive elements in Childrens' at Main Library, including an interactive wall projector in which kids can watch their drawings come to life on a large screen.
- Converted the periodical space at Whetstone Branch into a new teen space. CML worked with teen ambassadors to learn their wants and needs. The new space includes YouMedia, individual study pods and makers space.

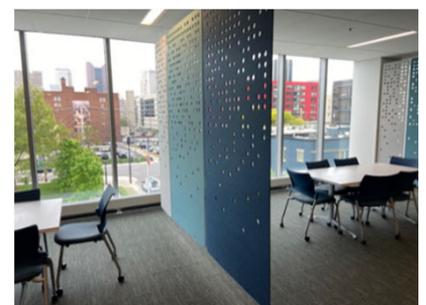
## PROJECTS PLANNED FOR 2024

The funds appropriated for general fund and operational projects includes a contingency for unplanned projects. The following projects are scheduled for 2024:

- Replace copy, scan and fax equipment with a self-service solution for customers at the remaining locations. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$315K.
- Upgrade computer reservation system and mobile print experience for customers. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$300K.
- Upgrade and replace outdated and end of life network equipment. The cost of this project is estimated to be \$170K.
- Branch enhancements at Northside Branch which includes adding additional study rooms. The cost of the enhancements is estimated to be \$120K.
- Add a business center to Parsons Branch. The cost of the enhancements is estimated to be \$38K.
- Improve Main Library's parking garage exit and signage in stairwells and elevator vestibules. The cost of the improvements is estimated to be \$30K.



*Above and right:* the Business and Nonprofit Resource Center at Main Library offers expert help, co-working space and Windows/Mac computers and private meeting room.



# 2023 Major Initiatives and Accomplishments

CML's purpose is to inspire reading, share resources, and connect people. The Strategic Plan focuses on three external strategies: Young Minds, My Library and Life Skills; and three internal strategies: Our People, Our Partners and Our Work. More detailed information on CML's Strategic Plan is available at [columbuslibrary.org](http://columbuslibrary.org). Initiatives and accomplishments are aligned with and support the Strategic Plan, below is a list 2023 accomplishments.

- Welcomed 34,000 visitors and 130 national and local authors to the inaugural two-day Columbus Book Festival. The event was hosted by Columbus Metropolitan Library Foundation and presented by Battelle.
- Celebrated CML's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary all year long, but March 4<sup>th</sup> marked the library's official "birthday" and each location celebrated by hosting birthday bash events for the community.
- Hosted a Job and Resource Fair at Main Library connecting job-seekers with more than 60 employers and community organizations. The Human Resource Association of Central Ohio offered sessions on personal branding and interviewing tips.
- Opened the new Gahanna Branch (March 2023) which included an interactive Children's area, an expanded School Help Center and Ready for Kindergarten area, meeting and study rooms and tween and teen areas with computers.
- Gahanna Branch received the 2023 People's Choice Award from American Institute of Architects Ohio.
- Hosted the second New American Book Fair at Dublin Branch. The fair featured the works of authors, poets, artists, agents, writers, film producers, printers and publishers from the new American, immigrant, refugee community and other organizations.
- Provided monthly library services, including books, audiobooks, DVDs and CDs to over 40 senior living facilities.
- Received a donation from *The Columbus Dispatch* of over 700 boxes of photo archives, artifacts and other publications. Included in this treasure trove of Columbus history are photographs of John Glenn, including one of him meeting President John F. Kennedy in the Oval Office in 1962. This collection is being digitized and is searchable on the library's website.
- Partnered with Urban Library Council to launch the Barbershop Books program to local barbershops. The program mission is to inspire Black boys and other vulnerable children to read for fun through child-centered, culturally responsive and community-based programming and content. The launch event drew close to 400 attendees.
- Installed an Ohio Historical Marker at the Martin Luther King (MLK) Branch, which commemorates the first branch named after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and honors the legacy of Keisha Jenkins Gibbs, a former MLK Branch Manager.
- Deployed School Reading Assistants to offer Reading Buddies to K-3 students across three local school districts. The program is tailored to individual reading levels by focusing on one of three skills: letter recognition, decoding, and comprehension.
- Partnered with Volunteers of America to collect over 550 backpacks and supplies for local students.
- Partnered with Smart Columbus to pilot Digital Skills Hubs Programs. The program was a series of digital skills classes which included computer and internet use; cybersecurity and privacy; and online resources for health, banking and transportation. Participants received a new Chromebook at no cost upon completion of the program.
- CML is focused on helping children and students succeed. In 2023 CML:
  - Offered a six-week virtual Ready for K class series to 418 students, 57 teachers and 27 daycare centers. Classes focused on skills and academic knowledge needed to succeed in kindergarten.
  - Hosted Kindergarten Success Camps for incoming kindergartners. Students prepared for school and practiced school readiness skills with a key focus on letter recognition, writing and listening comprehension.
  - Helped 145,000 children be better prepared for school through Storytimes, classes, and camps.
  - Recorded 76,400 School Help visits from students in kindergarten through grade 12 seeking help with schoolwork.
  - Registered 48,100 kids, teens, and adults for the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge.
  - Delivered 70,400 books to nearly 600 classrooms through the School Delivery program.

# Challenges and Opportunities for 2024 and Beyond

- Providing programs and services to address learning loss and decline in student reading skills due to the pandemic
- Promoting the wide variety of library programs and services available to customers
- Adapting service demands to meet changing customer and community needs
- Committing to diversity, equity and inclusion to foster a workplace and community where everyone belongs and thrives
- Partnering with library leaders to impact the evolving roles of libraries within communities
- Pursuing partnerships, advocacy, and community relationships to supplement the budget and enhance services
- Leveraging data to enhance services and anticipate future community needs
- Investing in staff to meet evolving community demands
- Adapting our collection to provide access to a broad and balanced view of society – its culture, history, and diversity of beliefs
- Identifying cost-effective and innovative ways to improve operations
- Continuing to enhance safety and security



CML is open to all, removing barriers to access to information and technology, so our customer can learn, grow and thrive.

