



COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN LIBRARY

2025

Financial Summary





April 2025

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

As Finance Officer of Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML), I am pleased to present CML's 2025 Financial Summary. This summary provides an overview of CML's 2025 budget, financial activities and key programs and services, reflecting our commitment to fiscal sustainability and community support. Developed with the collaboration of CML staff and executive leadership, this report is unaudited and presented on a non-GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principals) basis. CML's current audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report is located on CML's website, columbuslibrary.org.

At CML, our purpose is to inspire reading, share resources and connect people. We are dedicated to serving our community and continuously adapting to offer essential programs and services. We invite you to explore the wide range of programs and services offered. Whether you're looking for resources to help with job and career development, social services or educational programs for children and adults, CML is here to support you. Visit our website to learn more about our offerings and stay updated on the latest news and events. Stay connected with us on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#)) for regular updates and join us in making a positive impact in our community.

The 2025 budget (January 1 – December 31) supports the library's long-term financial and operational strategy. It was developed to support purposeful investments in the communities we serve and affords CML the capacity to adapt its programmatic investments, as necessary.

CML follows a strategy of fiscal sustainability. This fiscally prudent approach places CML in a strong financial position and allows us to continue to invest in our customers through mission-critical programs, services and facilities. We responsibly plan for our future financial and operational needs by preparing a 10-year financial projection and referring to long-term equipment and furniture replacement cycles and facility improvement plans.

We will work diligently to generate the greatest impact and largest return from every dollar of public investment. The Finance Team has made every effort to provide the most relevant 2025 budget information in a clear and concise format. If you have any questions concerning any of the information provided in this report, please contact me at (614) 849-1037.

Sincerely,
Jamie Lang
Finance Officer / Fiscal Officer

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FUN FACTS FOR 2024

CML in-person
visits were equal to

53 

Sold-Out **Buckeye
Football** games
in 2024

Ohio Stadium capacity: 102,780

CML customers **borrowed**
a library item every

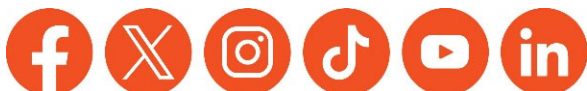
2.3 
seconds
On average

31,536,000 seconds/year

CML customers **visited**
our website every

 **2.7**
seconds
On average

Follow Us and Stay Connected!



OVERVIEW 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 in the old City Hall. CML has since expanded to 22 branches and Main Library. Construction is expected to start on a new 24th location, West Case Branch, in 2025.

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.

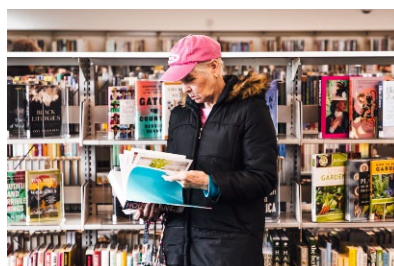
VISION AND PURPOSE

CML's vision is "a thriving community where wisdom prevails" and our 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.

The budget supports the needs of our customers and affords us the capacity to respond to areas of great need such as:

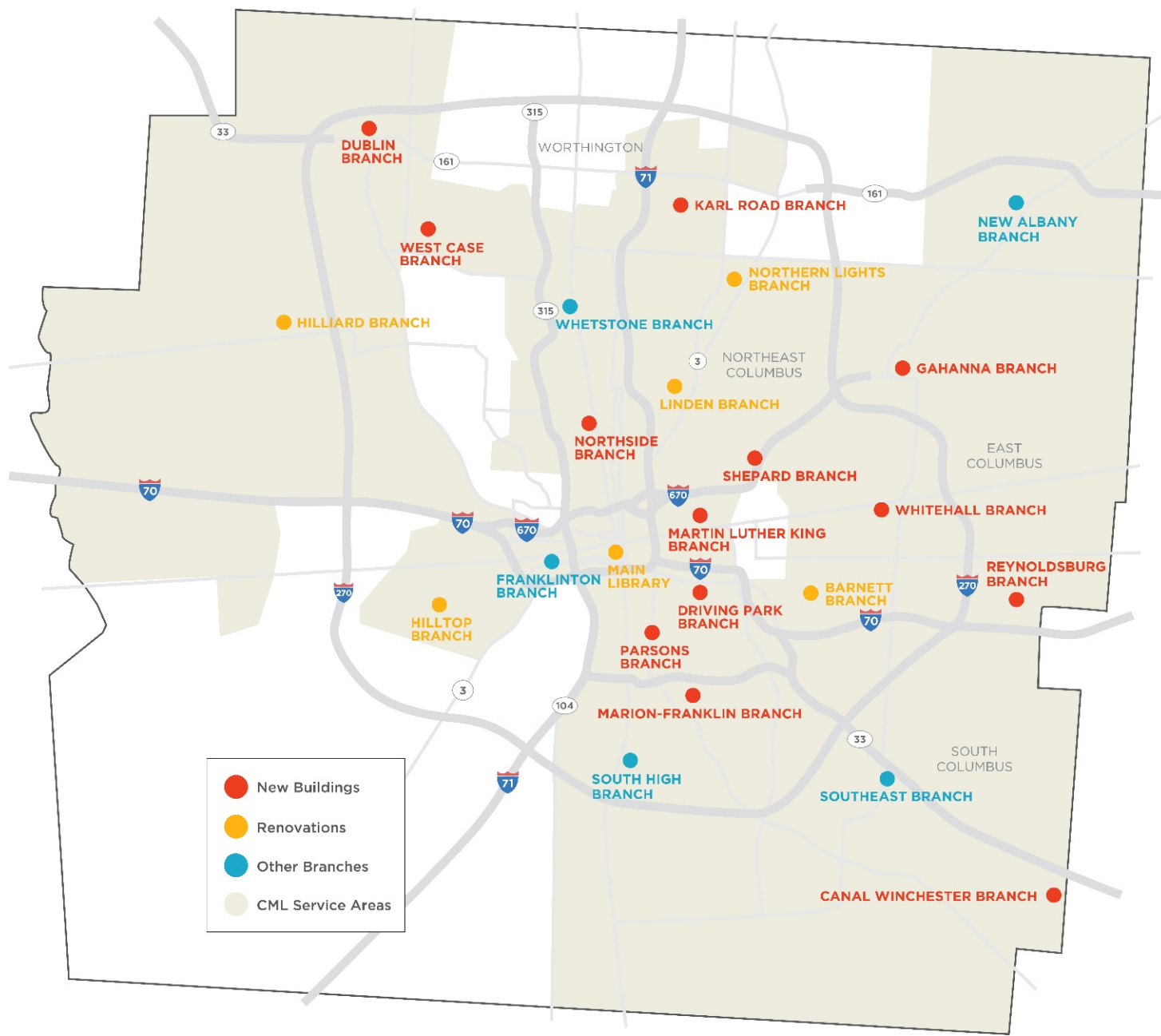
Preparing Children for Kindergarten	Third-Grade Reading Proficiency	High School Graduation Rates	College and Career Readiness and Employment Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready for Kindergarten Classes • Ready for Kindergarten Storytime • Play to Learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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



Library Service Area

23 Locations Serving Franklin County

(West Case Branch coming in 2027)



CML By The Numbers

2024 CML STATISTICS

CML welcomed 5.5 million visitors and loaned out 13.8 million items in 2024. Additional usage metrics are highlighted below.

Circulation 13.8 million	Computer & Wireless Sessions 2.7 million
User Visits 5.5 million	Web Visits 11.6 million
Cardholders 675,000	eContent Use 4.3 million
Kids Cards Issued 30,000	Social Media Followers 197,000

HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED

SCHOOL HELP*

79,000 visits from K-12 students who sought help with schoolwork and reading practice.

READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

183,000 children and caregivers attended Storytimes, classes and camps to get better prepared for school.

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

53,400 kids, teens and adults read over the summer to keep skills sharp.

AFTER-SCHOOL SNACK AND SUMMER LUNCH

108,000 children received a free summer lunch or after-school snack.

PROVIDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

JOB, TECH AND SOCIAL SERVICES HELP

26,900 customers acquired resources to address challenges.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

29,500 customers served to improve opportunities for work and connection in central Ohio.

23

Locations in Franklin County



18

Central Ohio library systems sharing books and materials



10

Public School Districts Served



34

Schools receiving our Book Delivery Service

- 630 Classrooms
- 75,000 Books



*includes School Help Center and Reading Buddies sessions.

OPEN TO ALL

LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES¹

CML's collection contains 2.5 million items: 1.7 million physical items including books, music CDs, DVDs, magazines and sheet music and 750,000 digital items such as eBooks, eAudiobooks and digital magazines. The collection contains adult and children's materials in over 35 languages including Spanish, French, Somali, Arabic and Chinese.

CML is a member of the Central Library Consortium (CLC), consisting of 18 library systems throughout central Ohio. As a member of CLC, CML shares an online catalog and select online resources with 17 other systems to offer customers a collection of over 4 million items with over 825,000 unique titles.

Public computers at all library locations provide access to the internet and Microsoft Office products. CML's website, columbuslibrary.org, allows you to search our online catalog, download and stream your favorite eContent and access digital resources for research and learning anytime, anywhere. Below is a sample of digital library resources available.

DIGITAL RESOURCES²

eContent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eBooks• eAudiobooks• Digital Magazines
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ancestry• Consumer Reports
Learning Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mango Languages• LinkedIn Learning• HelpNow
News	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Columbus Dispatch Digital• PressReader• Access World News

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT CML

Check out books, eBooks, eAudiobooks, CDs, DVDs and stream films and documentaries

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

¹Programs and services are free with a library card.

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

OPEN TO ALL

LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES¹ CONTINUED

CML offers programs and services for customers of all ages. The programs below illustrate CML's commitment to helping children build a foundation for a successful life. The Kids & Teens page on CML's website offers more details and helpful resources.

WE HELP CHILDREN SUCCEED

Ready for Kindergarten Storytime	Engaging with books, stories and caregiver tips to help build early literacy skills and a love of reading	Reading Buddies²	Helping K-3 students with reading skills and connecting them to great books
Ready for Kindergarten Classes	Helping children and families get ready for kindergarten through hands-on practice	School Help	Assisting K-12 students with schoolwork and academic practice
Kindergarten Success Camp	Helping 5-year-olds and their caregivers gain skills and experience before entering school	School Delivery	Providing students regular access to high-interest books at select schools
Play to Learn	Helping children be better prepared for school both academically and socially through hands-on activities and child led playtime	Teens Create: Open Studio	Helping teens acquire and develop skills in creative pursuits

¹Programs and services are free with a library card.

CML is committed to helping the community reach its full potential by offering programs and services that provide adults access to opportunities that improve their lives. In collaboration with community partners, CML provides assistance in areas of Workforce Development, Social Services, Adult Education and Digital Inclusion. CML continues to review the programs, services and resources available to ensure we are meeting the community's needs. The pages for Adults on CML's website include the full list of offerings in these areas.

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



Left: Teens learning about chess strategies at Southeast Branch

Right: STEAM club experimented with digital art, music-making and photography

2025 Operating Budget

Revenue and Expenditures

The General Fund is the library's main operating fund supporting key operations. 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 table below provides a summary of the revenue and expenditure budget for the library's general operating fund.

The annual budget serves as the foundation for financial planning, performance monitoring, decision making, and control of expenditures. In 2025, CML's General Fund revenue (\$120M) exceeds the General Fund expenditures (\$87M). 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 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 1.64 mills and 1.13 mills.

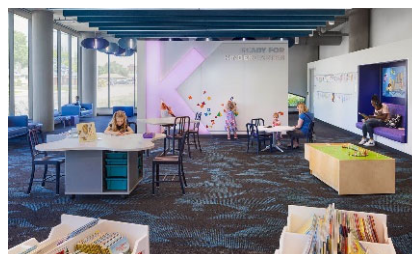
Public Library Fund (PLF) revenue is received from the State of Ohio's Public Library Fund. The Public Library Fund is funded with 1.70% of the State's General Revenue Fund tax revenue and divided among Ohio's public libraries.

General Fund

Revenue (in thousands)	2025 Budget
General Property Tax	\$ 96,035
Public Library Fund (PLF)	\$ 27,760
PLF Debt Service Transfer ¹	\$ (7,329)
Net PLF Total	\$ 20,431
Customer Fees	\$ 200
Charges for Services	\$ 1,428
Investment Revenue	\$ 1,791
Miscellaneous	\$ 301
Total	\$ 120,185

Expenditures (in thousands)	2025 Budget
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 58,682
Operational Services	\$ 14,937
Library Materials	\$ 8,423
Capital Outlay	\$ 1,725
Supplies	\$ 1,973
Other	\$ 1,510
Total	\$ 87,249

¹Approximately 25% of PLF is used to support the Debt Service Fund annually



Left: Digital Skills Hub training session at Hilltop Branch

Right: families enjoying the Children's space at Reynoldsburg Branch

Outstanding Debt

The library has taken on moderate debt levels to replace or renovate aged, high-maintenance and inefficient buildings. 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.

The library's credit rating from Moody's Investors Service (Moody's) is Aa1. The rating provides an independent view of the library's overall financial well-being. Moody's rating rationale cited CML's strong financial management and stable management team as underlying reasons for the strong credit rating.

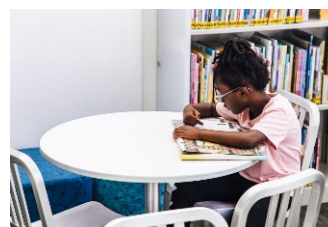
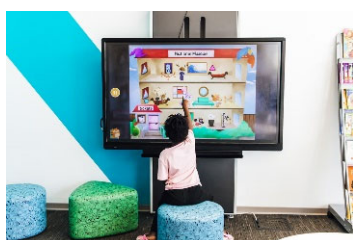
CML had \$80 million in debt outstanding as of January 1, 2025, the majority of which is related to the 2019 and 2020 Public Library Fund (PLF) Notes. The PLF Notes are special obligations and secured by a pledge of CML's allocation from the Public Library Fund and reach maturity in 2025, 2027, 2037 and 2043.

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 receipted annually in the Debt Service Fund to cover debt repayment. Detailed debt service schedules are included in CML's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report located on CML's website, columbuslibrary.org.



*The 2020 Vision Plan is discussed in more detail on page 11.



Facilities Plan

CML's facilities plan is aligned with CML's long-term financial and operational strategy. The 2020 Vision Plan, the library's existing facilities 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.

A new 24th library branch was approved and will be constructed on the city's northwest side. Once completed, West Case Branch will be CML's 24th library location serving Franklin County. The project is in the early stages of design with construction expected to begin in 2026.

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 2023
- **Reynoldsburg Branch:** opened 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 Branch*:** the new building is expected to open in 2026

NEW 24TH LOCATION

- **West Case Branch*:** opening is preliminarily estimated to be end of 2027

**Estimated, subject to change.*



Left: 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 Improvements

PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2024

In 2024, \$2.7 million was committed to facility improvements and technology projects. The following projects were completed:

- Upgraded computer reservation system for customers across all locations. The user-friendly solution allows customers to make quick on-site reservations.
- Installed new document management equipment at remaining 13 locations which provides customers with self-service copy, scan and fax services.
- Installed solar panels at five branches. Solar panels will reduce utility costs, greenhouse gases and other pollution emissions. Customers can view real-time solar energy data on monitoring screens in each branch, fostering awareness about sustainability.
- Deployed mobile printing services at all locations which allows customers to print directly from their own smartphones, tablets or laptops.
- Installed a Pixel Peg Light Board and new furniture in the Children's area at the Whitehall Branch.
- Upgraded Driving Park Branch interior. Created a new business center and added new interactive elements in the children's area and new furniture in Teen and Children's spaces.
- Introduced three new microfilm machines in Local History and Genealogy department enabling real-time image streaming, quick cropping, scanning and versatile format storage for enhanced customer experience.
- Enhanced Martin Luther King Teen and Children's spaces. Added a new gaming area, creative space, lockers, activity tables and gathering spaces in the Teen space. In Children's and Tween, we added art rails, activity tables, a gear wall, pixel peg wall and toddler interactive items.

PROJECTS PLANNED FOR 2025

The funds appropriated for operational projects includes a contingency for unplanned projects. The following projects are scheduled for 2025:

- Replace end of life Multifunction Printers at each location. The new printers will ensure reliability and improved print quality for customers. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$282,000.
- Install a new Firewall System at each location. The current system is at end of life. This will enhance network security and protect data privacy for our customers. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$350,000.
- Update Audio Visual Equipment in meeting rooms at Main Library, enhancing the user experience for our customers. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$150,000.
- Install a curb extensions and bike crosswalk at the Gahanna Branch, improving pedestrian and cyclist safety. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$30,000.



Above and right:
the new
Children's Pixel
Peg Light Board
and reading
circles have been
very popular at
the Whitehall
Branch

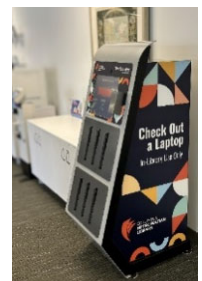


2024 Accomplishments and Highlights

CML's accomplishments, initiatives and highlights are listed below.

- Opened the new Reynoldsburg Branch (April 2024), which is nearly double in size and includes an Interactive Children's area, Tween and Teen areas with computers and study space, dedicated meeting rooms and study rooms.
- Partnered with Kings Art Complex to digitize the Columbus Call & Post photograph archive, which includes nearly 20,000 photographs covering the people, places and events of Black citizens and luminaries alike in Columbus, Ohio from 1962 to 1995. The collection will be freely accessible on CML's website through the My History digital collection.
- Added free notary service at 20 of our locations. Customers can meet with a commissioned notary public for basic services such as Student Driver Affidavits and Applications for Change of Name.
- Celebrated the April 8 solar eclipse with watch parties at several locations that included a variety of programs and activities. Over 100,000 free glasses were distributed to customers leading up to April 8, which were later sent to South America, via a partnership with SWACO, for children to safely watch the fall Annular eclipse.
- Held several art exhibitions featuring artwork from established and emerging Ohio artists in the Patrick Losinski Gallery at Main Library, including one from Goodwill Art Studio and Gallery featuring artwork from artists with developmental disabilities and other barriers.
- Offered a variety of digital inclusion public programs during the National Digital Inclusion Alliance's Digital Inclusion Week. Programs included Community Support Center, tech help and presentations on Artificial Intelligence.
- Welcomed more than 7,000 public library professionals to the Public Library Association conference held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in April 2024. This was the first time Columbus served as the host city for this premier event.
- Partnered with Greater Columbus Sports Commission to welcome U.S. Figure Skating Championships to Columbus. The library hosted skating legends Gracie Gold and Nancy Kerrigan who spoke about their books, had a slip-n-slide sock skating rink and displayed artifacts from some of America's greatest skaters.
- Installed a laptop kiosk in the Business and Nonprofit Resource Center to provide entrepreneurs, small business owners and nonprofit leaders access to specialized business research databases and Adobe Creative Cloud.
- Presented the annual History and Genealogy Day, a day of genealogy and history activities. Attendees had the opportunity to learn research tips and bring genealogy research questions to Main Library's Local History and Genealogy staff.
- Welcomed over 1,000 high school and college students to the Internship and Apprenticeship Fair, where more than 60 employers spoke with students about part time jobs, summer opportunities, career shadowing, traditional internships and apprenticeships.
- Deployed new job resources, such as Got Resume Builder which utilizes AI to analyze work history, skills and education and offers personalized suggestions to improve a customer's resume. This resource is available on CML's Job & Career Help Page.
- Hosted a Record Sealing and Expungement Clinic in partnership with Legal Society of Southeastern and Central Ohio, helping justice-involved individuals re-enter the workforce and gain access to community resources.
- Piloted Reading Buddies Skill Builder Packets at four locations. These take-home packets contain a simple activity focused on early reading skills such as consonant-vowel-consonant words.
- Welcomed over 35,000 attendees and more than 200 national and local authors to the second Columbus Book Festival. Customers are invited to the free two-day Columbus Book Festival in July 2025. Additional event information can be found on the website, www.columbusbookfestival.org.

Right: laptop lending kiosk at Main Library



Opportunities for 2025 and Beyond

- Pursuing partnerships, advocacy, and community relationships to supplement the budget and enhance services
- Removing barriers to access to information and technology, so our customers can learn, grow and succeed
- Adapting service demands to meet changing customer and community needs
- Advancing knowledge of artificial intelligence and assessing its impact
- Promoting the wide variety of library programs and services available to customers
- Committing to fostering a workplace and community where everyone belongs and thrives
- Partnering with library leaders to impact the evolving roles of libraries within communities
- Leveraging data to enhance services and anticipate future community needs
- Supporting staff to meet evolving community demands will allow CML to continue to provide exceptional services and support to our broad customer base
- Identifying cost-effective and innovative ways to improve operations



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

