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Columbus Metropolitan Library

Media Fact Sheet

CML's Mission:

Since 1873, CML has kept a promise to the citizens of Franklin County to be the place to inspire reading, share resources and connect people, with a vision of a thriving community where wisdom prevails.

With millions of books, eBooks, digital products and tools; welcoming community spaces; friendly and knowledgeable staff – and an open to all philosophy – CML's 23 locations are the cornerstones of the communities they serve.

Our library is steadfastly committed to adapting its strategies and tactics to deliver the programs, services and facilities that our communities need, focusing its strategic planning on the areas where the library's efforts will have the most impact.

CML's history:

The library system that would become CML got its start as the Public Library Reading Room, which opened in 1873 in City Hall (on the site of what is now the Ohio Theatre). In 1903, a \$200,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie provided the funding for Main Library, which was built on a plot formerly occupied by the Governor's Mansion. The building opened to the public in 1907.

CML has embarked on an aspirational building program to renovate or rebuild its locations:

Phase I

- The new **Driving Park Branch** opened July 12, 2014
- The new **Whitehall Branch** opened April 11, 2015
- The new **Parsons Branch** opened June 4, 2016
- The transformed **Main Library** opened June 25, 2016

- The renovated **Northern Lights Branch** opened Sept. 24, 2016
- The new **Shepard Branch** opened Oct. 13, 2016
- The new **Northside Branch** opened June 22, 2017
- The new **Hilliard Branch** opened June 21, 2018
- The new **Martin Luther King Branch** opened Oct. 18, 2018
- The new **Dublin Branch** opened June 6, 2019

Phase II

- The new **Karl Road Branch** opened Sept. 9, 2021
- The renovated **Hilltop Branch** opened Sept. 30, 2021
- The new **Gahanna Branch** opened March 4, 2023
- The new **Reynoldsburg Branch** opened April 24, 2024
- The new **Marion-Franklin Branch** opened Oct. 18, 2025
- The renovated **Barnett Branch** opened Dec. 13, 2025
- The new **Canal Winchester Branch** opened Jan. 10, 2026
- The renovated **Linden Branch** is under construction

Fun firsts:

- **1892:** The library purchases its first typewriter.
- **1909:** The audiovisual program begins at Main Library.
- **1928:** The fountain with statue of Peter Pan is donated by Charles E. Munson in memory of his son. It is dedicated to the children of Columbus.
- **1928:** The first four branches are dedicated: Clintonville, Hilltop, Linden and Parsons.
- **1955:** Library circulation passes 1 million for the first time.
- **1963:** Paperback collection begins.
- **1977:** The first public computers are provided for customers.
- **1978:** Videos are added to the collection.
- **1978:** Collections are labeled with barcodes for the first time and the public card file catalog is removed.
- **1996:** Self-serve checkout begins.
- **1997:** The library offers customers Internet access.
- **2004:** The first School Help Center opens at the Linden Branch.
- **2014:** The library introduces automatic renewal of borrowed physical materials.
- **2017:** The library eliminates overdue fines.

CML has:

- 23 library locations in Franklin County, including Main Library and 22 branches, totaling roughly 600,000 square feet of space
- A dedicated staff of more than 800
- 675,000 cardholders
- School Help for K-12 students
- Partnerships with 17 other central Ohio library systems as a member of the Central Library Consortium

In 2024, CML had:

- A circulation of 13.8 million
- 5.5 million in-person visits
- 11.6 million web visits
- 4.3 million eContent downloads or streams
- 197,000 social media followers
- 53,400 kids, teens and adults participate in Summer Reading Challenge
- 79,000 visits to the School Help Centers in all library locations
- 108,000 children receive a free summer lunch or after-school snack

CML serves:

- 10 school districts
- 72.2% of the population of Franklin County
- 63.4% of the county's geographical area

CML received:

- The 2010 National Library of the Year by *Library Journal*
- The 2011 National Medal by the Institute for Museum and Library Services for work in community service, the highest honor for libraries and museums
- The honor of helping Columbus be named the host city for the 2016 International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress
- A Building Award from the American Institute of Architects and the American Library Association for our Whitehall Branch in 2017 and again for our Hilltop Branch in 2025
- Inclusion of our CEO, Lauren Hagan, among *Columbus Business First's* 2025 "Women of Influence"
- The 2025 "Library of the Future" award, in recognition of our AI Task Force, by the American Library Association and Information Today, Inc.

CML leadership:

- Lauren Hagan – Chief Executive Officer
- Justin Bumbico – Information Technology Officer
- Charlie Hansen – Chief Public Services Officer
- Jamie Lang – Financial Officer/Fiscal Officer
- Wendy Tressler – Planning and Strategy Officer
- Dr. Anthony Wilson – Chief Operating Officer
- Donna Zuiderweg – Chief of Service Design and Engagement