



AGENDA

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 4:00pm
McGuire Community Room
610 Woodmere Ave., Traverse City, MI 49686

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Public Comment***
5. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of February 15, 2024
 - b. Department Reports
 - c. Finance and Facilities Committee Report – did not meet
 - d. Policy and Personnel Committee Report – did not meet
 - e. Financial Report
 - f. Member Library Communications – FLPL | IPL | PCL
 - g. Friends of TADL Report – Jud Barclay, President
 - h. Correspondence
6. **Items Removed from the Consent Calendar**
7. **Presentation: Talking Book Library, Anita Chouinard**
8. **Director Report**
9. **Old Business**
 - a. Board Study Session & Retreat – Location and Draft Agenda
 - b. Millage Fact Sheet
10. **New Business**
 - a. Bathroom Budget Approval
 - b. Discussion Item: TADL and Regional Literacy
11. **Public Comment***
12. **Trustee Comment**
 - a. Sharing Ideas
13. **Closed Session (if needed)**
14. **Adjournment**

* If you wish to speak during the Public Comment section of the meeting, please (1) wait until you are recognized; (2) approach the podium and use the microphone; (3) state your name and the county and township or city in which you reside; and (4) limit your comments to 3 minutes. Please sign in at the podium.



Board of Trustees Regular Meeting MINUTES

Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 3:00pm
McGuire Community Room
610 Woodmere Ave., MI 49686

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Pakieser at 4:00pm. Present were: Pakieser (President); Jones (Vice President); Vickery (Secretary); Odgers (Treasurer); Deyo, Beuthin (arrived at 4:03), and Gedman (Trustees). Also present were: Howard (Director); Baldwin, and Carpenter (Staff).

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

All members in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

President Pakieser announced a change to the agenda reversing the order of item 7, Director Report, and item 8, Presentation by Halladay-Schmandt, so that the presentation is first. It was MOVED by Odgers, SUPPORTED by Jones, to approve the amended agenda. Motion CARRIED.

4. **Public Comment**

President Pakieser opened the floor for public comment. The following people addressed the board: Chantel Lentz, introduced herself who was recently promoted to the position of Branch Manager at East Bay Branch Library. Jud Barclay, President of the Friends of TADL, gave a brief background of the 501c3 organization and explained how the Friends of TADL support the needs of the library. There are currently 350 members.

5. **Consent Calendar**

- a. *Approval of Minutes - Regular Meeting of January 18, 2024*
- b. *Department Reports*
- c. *Finance and Facilities Committee Report – February 6, 2024*
- d. *Policy and Personnel Committee Report – February 6, 2024*
- e. *Financial Report*
- f. *Member Library Communications – FLPL | IPL | PCL*
- g. *Friends of TADL Report – Jud Barclay, President*
- h. *Correspondence*

It was MOVED by Odgers, SUPPORTED by Beuthin, to accept and affirm receipt of the consent calendar information as presented. Motion CARRIED.

6. **Director Report**

Howard highlighted the following:

- Vicki Shurly, Director of Peninsula Community Library, would like to help with the millage.
- TADL will be providing excess donation books to the jail and will be providing a bookmark on library services as well.
- Baldwin sent a link to the trustees for a training video done by Ryan Dowd on Homelessness and libraries. All staff are required to complete the training.

- Howard and three staff members attended a Native American summit provided by the GT Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians called Nurturing the Eighth Fire where indigenous people and non-indigenous people come together to solve problems. Many local organization and municipalities attended.

7. **Presentation: Ashley Halladay-Schmandt, Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness**

Halladay-Schmandt provided a basic update of the recently introduced, City led, Memorandum of Understanding for a year-round homeless shelter. The City asked the MW MI Coalition and Safe Harbor to play a supportive role in the memorandum initiative with the intention to bring people together to work on a plan. There are currently about 275 homeless in the community with about 70 of them in a chronic state of homelessness, a microcosm of what is seen nationwide. As TADL had become a de facto shelter over the past few years resulting in increased behavioral infractions in the library, the board raised a number of questions ranging from how the library can have a voice in the conversation to what remedies may be on the horizon through the efforts of the City, County, and other entities who offer services to the homeless population. Much discussion was had about current efforts and challenges for all affected.

8. **Old Business**

a. **Board Resolution in Support of Millage**

Howard noted that Jocks (Counsel) had suggested tabling the resolution for now to potentially modify the document and to consider timing of the resolution. Vickery felt the resolution might be redundant, Beuthin supported revisiting it at a later date, and other trustees agreed on tabling the item at this time. President Pakieser sent the resolution back to the Policy Committee for review.

b. *Legal Agreements – Sondee Racine & Doreen / DAR Law*

Howard noted that both law firms proposed doing away with the retainer fee and confirmed that the retainer and usage hours have been awash in the past years, not saving TADL money. A discussion of the retainer vs hourly fees ensued and there was agreement to accept the removal of the retainer and to revisit the methods with the next proposal to ensure TADL selects the best scenario for TADL’s needs. It was **MOVED** by Jones, **SUPPORTED** by Gedman, to engage in services with DAR Law Firm for employment law matters. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Jones – aye	Odgers – aye	Pakieser – aye	Deyo – aye
Gedman – aye	Beuthin – aye	Vickery – aye	

Motion **CARRIED** with 7 ayes.

It was **MOVED** by Jones, **SUPPORTED** by Gedman, to engage in services with Sondee Racine & Doreen for general legal services, revisiting the billing method with the next proposal. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Jones – aye	Odgers – aye	Pakieser – aye	Deyo – aye
Gedman – aye	Beuthin – aye	Vickery – aye	

Motion **CARRIED** with 7 ayes.

9. **New Business**

a. *RFP Carpet*

Howard reported that an initial quote was gathered to replace areas of carpet and flooring that have buckling and/or wear, about 35% of the building. Since the quote was over her spending limit Howard asked the board to approve an RFP. She also noted that, eventually, all of the 25-

year-old carpet will need replacing. Deyo encouraged getting a wide array of quotes from local and national companies. It was MOVED by Jones, SUPPORTED by Vickery, to approve and authorize the Director to pursue an RFP for carpet replacement in areas with the most wear. Motion CARRIED.

b. *2023 Year-end Review: Statistics | Financial | Strategic Plan Achievements*

Howard provided the board with comparative statistics from pre-pandemic, mid-pandemic, and the most current year statistics as well as behavioral incidents and suspensions during that time. Physical circulation and programming attendance are back up to or exceed pre-pandemic levels. Electronic resource usage has steadily increased throughout the years. The bookmobile, in its first year, reached 1678 miles to area outreach destinations. Howard also provided a compilation of achievements to date based on the 2021-2024 strategic plan. Baldwin provided a draft review of the 2023 year-end financials and answered questions. Actual financial figures will be finalized after the audit.

c. *Discussion: Board Retreat Details*

Howard provided a sample agenda for the board study session and retreat based on topics suggested at past meetings and an option outlined wherein the topics on the agenda could be adequately broken down into single topic discussions at regular board meetings. Discussion ensued regarding pros and cons of having the retreat or not, the focus or purpose of the retreat, and the timing. Discussion also focused on the role of the board in the pursuit of oversight and aspirational goals. Opinions varied but there was consensus to hold a study session and retreat in which all members could attend.

It was MOVED by Beuthin, SUPPORTED by Jones to change the March 21st study session and retreat to a regular board meeting at 4:00pm. Motion CARRIED.

It was MOVED by Gedman, SUPPORTED by Beuthin, to hold a study session and retreat at the April meeting instead of the regular meeting. One trustee noted they could not attend that day. Everyone was available in May. It was MOVED by Gedman, SUPPORTED by Beuthin, to amend his original motion and hold the study session and retreat on May 16th at 12:00pm at a location to be determined instead of the regular board meeting previously scheduled. Motion CARRIED.

10. **Public Comment**

President Pakieser opened the floor for public comment. The following people addressed the board: Melissa McKenna, Head of Adult Services, highlighted several current partnerships (Embody TC, Inland Seas, and Author Barb Barton) and upcoming events related to those partnerships.

11. **Trustee Comment**

Deyo commended the security officers at the library who are very capable and engaging with the patrons. He feels the board should consider employing them year-round.

Beuthin remarked how impressed the folks from around the country on her zoom call were with the beautiful view of the space she had to work from in the library overlooking the lake.

Vickery offered the notion that, as the housing debate unfolds, the board might want to establish an ad hoc committee to stay alert and responsive to the issue so that the board can stay proactive as it relates to the library.

12. **Closed Session (if needed)**

A closed session was not needed.

13. **Adjournment**

With a motion to adjourn by Odgers, supported by Jones, President Pakieser adjourned the meeting at 5:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by board vote on March 21, 2024

V. Carpenter, Recording Secretary

M. Vickery, Board Secretary

DRAFT



Departmental Reports
for the month of February
(March 21, 2024 Board Meeting)

Adult Services

- The first weekend in February, TADL invited local author Austin Rowlander to demonstrate how he binds his self-published book. He and his contraption spent all day Friday in the Atrium binding and talking to dozens of people strolling in and out. The following day, twelve attended his talk about the journey to being an author and a bookbinder.
- Partnership Highlights (*Purposeful Partnerships*):
 - On a sunny Saturday in February, 75 adults and kids came to chat with Chief Richmond and 2 patrol officers of the TCPD for Coffee with a Cop/Cocoa with the Popo. This event was such a success, we're hoping to have it again in the fall.
 - Inland Seas was back in February to offer a program entitled *Doom as Fuel for the Future: Connecting with Youth Over Climate Anxiety* to help adults discuss climate change anxiety with the young people in their lives. (*Innovative Engagement*)
 - Traverse Area Historical Society continues their monthly local history programs.
 - The Senior Center Hobby and Current Events Discussion groups, as well as Yoga with Embody TC, continue to meet weekly here at the library. (*Inclusive Space*)
- In February, the following programs were held (in addition to those listed above):
 - Great Decisions is back for Spring 2024. Because of the success of the fall program, it was decided to offer two sessions this season. The first day filled up almost immediately, so it was good there was a second to offer. Our community loves to talk about current events! (*Innovative Engagement, Inclusive Space*)
 - There was also a short series offered about the history and role of the US Supreme Court with a local retired lawyer. This 2 session program had to add a third date due to the interest and amount of topics to discuss.
 - The annual February Puzzle Tournament returned for 2024. 58 people competed in teams to see who could get the puzzle done the fastest.
 - Our two regular book discussion groups continue to see strong attendance - Books & Brewskis had 19 attendees (*Innovative Engagement*) and Queer Tales (*Inclusive Space*) had 7 participants.
 - Digital Drop-Ins, Spanish Conversation Club, Books to Movies, TADL Stitchers, and Tai Chi continue to meet regularly.
- February Adult Services Statistics:
 - Programs - 42 & Attendance - 457
 - Outreach - 4 & Attendance - 11 (Digital Literacy trips to Senior Facilities with TBL on the Bookmobile)
 - Questions Answered - 2227

- Notary Signatures - 35
- Craft Kits Distributed - 65 (Embroidered Heart Cards)
- Friends Volunteer Hours - 25.6
- Study Room Usages - 212

Local History Collection

- Zoe, former LHC Petertyl Intern from summer 2023 has returned to work at TADL in the Tech Center. IT has graciously offered to share her time with the LHC. While Zoe is in the Tech Center staffing the desk, she is able to scan documents and work online helping with the collection. We are so thankful for her work. To date she has completed scanning everything used in the TADL Anniversary displays so that they can be turned into online exhibits for the rest of the year. She is currently working on scanning the transcripts of the Women's History Project of Northwest Michigan Oral History Project. We hope to be able to add this collection to the online database soon!
- The upstairs display was a group of photographs of local ski resorts and skiing.
- Reference staff answered 25 local history questions in February.
- Citizen Historian volunteers logged 13 hours of work for the LHC.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melissa McKenna
Department Head, Adult Services

Youth Services



The theme for this month in Youth Services was love and culture. We hosted so many cultural programs from the TSO Tots to Broadway Kids to the Origins of Hip Hop to the Northwest Michigan Ballet Theatre, in addition to our regular storytimes and afterschool programs. We also connected community members with community helpers during the Cocoa with the Popo program- children could make a police hat and have a cup of cocoa. Finally, Yoga and Mindfulness teacher Kristina

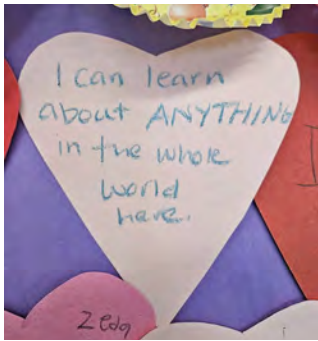
Howe hosted the first of three Mindfulness Storytimes for our families. We held 20 Early Literacy programs attended by 515 community members, as well as 20 afterschool and weekend programs attended by 533 community members.



We also spent time promoting the library to community members at events like the Traverse Heights Reading Night, the Dennis' Young at Art: Caldecott Show opening, the Dennis' Second Sunday Art Project, as well as the many preschool and daycare visits using the Bookmobile hosted by Kate Parvel, Early Literacy Librarian. Total outreach and Bookmobile visits connected us with 510 community members. We also received an invitation from Traverse Heights Elementary principal

Brian Kay to bring the Bookmobile to their summer meet-ups in June, July, and August, which we accepted. We did 2 outreach events attended by 140 community members, as well as 8 Bookmobile events attended by 370 community members.

Department Head Schuck has been hard at work with members from the [Born to Read](#) committee, Sharon Workman and Mary-Kay Archer, in redesigning the Welcome Baby packet previously handed out at Munson Hospitals into a Welcome Baby Gift bag that helps families interact with their babies and promotes literacy and other important family services in our community. Schuck also continues to support the Books from Birth campaign



Here are more useful statistics from the department for this month:

- Early Literacy
 - Programs: 20
 - Attendance: 642
- Afterschool and weekend programs
 - Programs: 30
 - Attendance: 422
- Reference Questions: 1,169 (up 15% from Feb 23)
 - In-person questions: 1,072 (up 17% from Feb 23)
 - Phone questions: 90
 - Digital Questions: 7
- STEM Kits
 - Monthly Checkouts: 336
 - Total STEM Kit holds: 163
- Passive Activities (total): 622
 - Why I love my library wall: 173
 - Guessing jar: 449

Submitted by Andy Schuck, Department Head

Sight & Sound

We started off February with a great event - Sight and Sound was at Little Fleet for a Psychedelic Lunar New Year celebration! We brought some classic vinyl for the DJ to play, signed up some new patrons and welcomed even more patrons back to the library with a cool new Sight and Sound Library Card!

On February 27th, the McGuire Community Room was used as a Presidential Primary Voting Location for Precinct 7. Library employees were here bright and early (5 am) to assist the electors with setup, and our Facilities Manager stayed late to help with takedown (Thanks very much, Bret!).

February Reference Questions

Digital: **135**

Phone: **333**

Walk-in: **1625**

TADL Meeting Room Stats February 2024

Total: **180**

TADL meetings: **23**

Personal/Outside Group Meetings: **157**

Paid Meetings: **3**
Unpaid Meetings: **177**
Walk-ins: **16**
Advance Reservation: **164**

Number of Meetings by Room February 2024

McGuire Room: **33**
Thirlby Room: **78**
Study Room D: **69**

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Denby
Department Head, Sight and Sound

Circulation

Love was definitely in the air in Circulation during February! Patrons really enjoyed the Blind Date books from Adult Services and the surprise gift sets that Heather and Vicki made up as Valentine's presents that included candles, mugs, pet bandanas, and other fun things.

February Circulation Numbers - Combined Branches (Woodmere, Kingsley, East Bay)

New patron accounts created: **↑257** (vs 217 last year)

Curbside pickups for February 2024: 11

Circulation Statistics for MeLCat, February 2024:

- TADL items sent to borrowing institutions: **↓1328** (vs 1382 last year)
- TADL items received from lending institutions: **↑2231** (vs 2016 last year)

Respectfully Submitted,
Christina Meyers
Head of Circulation

Marketing and Communications

February is short but it seems we pack as much in as if there were 31 days! We enjoyed multiple TV interviews and guest segments as well as the special February promotions. Thank you to Melissa for being our on-air celebrity! I assisted departments as requested and work is underway for the big events on the horizon (MakerFest and summer reading). I also watched a virtual webinar on Co-Creating Library Spaces (**innovative engagement, inclusive space**).



As part of the 2024 literacy initiative (**all strategic plan areas**) we finished prep on a community read-a-thon (**innovative engagement, targeted outreach**) as our "Leap into Reading Month!". Thank you to everyone who helped get this project off the ground, from concept to final proofing of materials. Now it's time to encourage everyone to sign up!

Press: We appeared in a publication for 24 of the 29 days of February and as well as three TV morning shows.

Website: 55,997 pageviews (+13% vs. Feb. 2023); 15,371 users (+7% vs. Feb. 2023)

Heather Brady
Marketing & Communications Manager

Human Resources

Please join me in wishing congratulations to our new hires and internal transfers/promotions, and best wishes to employees leaving TADL!

Newly Hired Employees:



Eliza Forrest
PT Substitute



Amy Gibson
PT Substitute



Nick Kandrot
PT Substitute

Employee Position Transfers:

None

Employee Departures:

Nicole Wenstrup, Substitute

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle Baldwin, Finance and Human Resources Manager

Facilities

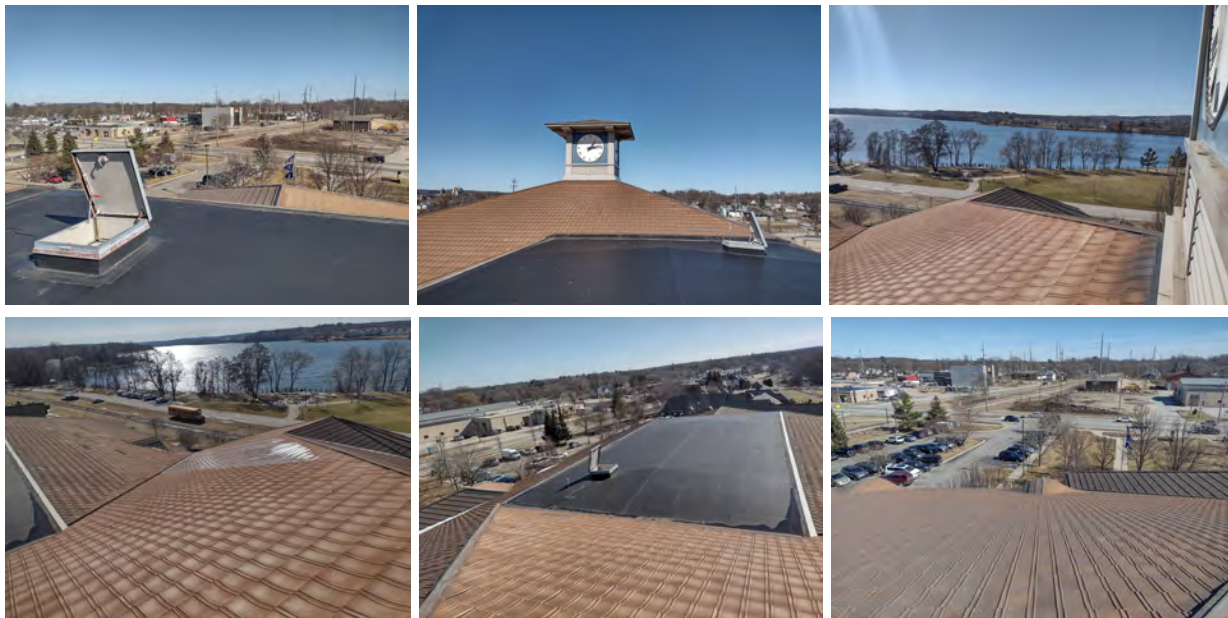
A major milestone for February was finalizing preparations for the bathroom renovation of all seven restrooms, including locking in a start date of Monday, March 11, 2024. Work will begin at 6am daily to get as much done as possible before Library open hours. Work is planned for the 2nd floor public restrooms and the 1st floor staff restrooms first, with the 1st floor public

restrooms to be done last. Other facilities highlights included:

- New track lighting in Youth Services boat/lighthouse area:



- Coordinate delivery of bathroom renovation fixtures (Aunt Flow and Pluie)
- Research carpet replacement options and summarize in memo to Michele Howard
- Obtain HVAC duct cleaning estimates; perform 2x annual filter changes
- Facilitate bookbinding event in Atrium
- Facilitate primary election workers end-of-day procedures
- Paul Deyo roof tour; photos for rest of the Board (personal tours always available):



Respectfully submitted,
Bret R Boulter, Facilities Manager

TADL Talking Book Library

A few TCAPS students came into TBL in February for a class project on Braille. They tried the Perkins Braille typewriter, looked at a couple braille books and left with craft kits and a card with the Braille alphabet on it.

Notary requests-11

Tuesdays@ Two read “The Recovery Agent” by Janet Evanovich.

Anita Chouinard
Talking Book Library Manager

East Bay Branch Library

New things at EBB in February include:

- 14 CARES Kits to circulate, thanks to Northwest Education Services.
- Our first instruments for circulation, tenor and baritone ukuleles.
- A 3D printer, thanks to the Technology Department, especially Mitch and Kellie for their help in getting us started!

We had fun trying out some new programs, including our first Family Movie Night where we showed Pixar's Elemental, and we partnered with Up North Pride for a Heartstopper Themed Valentine's Day Party. We also hosted a Tween Escape Room, a STEM Building Program, Valentine Creation Station Days, Adult Coloring Night, Yoga, Tai Chi with Josh Denby, weekly Sing & Stomp with Mr. Matt, and our monthly visit to Grand Traverse Academy with the Bookmobile.

We had multiple Black History Month displays, and some especially fun engagement with a Blind Date with a Book display, where patrons could check out a book with only a hint about its contents.



Respectfully submitted,
Chantel Lentz
East Bay Branch Manager

Kingsley Branch Library



Our annual February programs, Fancy Nancy Royal-Tea Party and Bake & Tell Challenge, were both wonderful successes! Our Kingsley Friends of the Library are instrumental in bringing the Royal-Tea Party, a literacy-themed program featuring refreshments, crafts, dancing, and a special storytime with the Cherry Festival Queen, to life! They hope to add a second session next year, as the 35 seats we are limited to always fill up within a day or two of the list opening. Bake & Tell Challenge drew 10 incredible bakers that shared their best goods with 50 library patrons, who voted on the People's Choice. This event really pulls the community

together!

Many thanks to our wonderful partners at Bay Area Transportation Authority, who included us in this year's grant to provide a bus pass available to checkout. This program is offered by the East Bay and Woodmere libraries as well! We are also grateful for their installation of a permanent stop right outside our front door, after having a trial stop since October 2023. Our community and patrons really appreciate the kindness of BATA's drivers and the convenience of having a stop right in the heart of downtown Kingsley.

Early Literacy Librarian Beth Anderson and I supported the students and staff at Kingsley Elementary Schools for their annual Literacy Night once again. This is a partnership that is at least 10 years strong! This year, the school opted not to have pre-registration as they have in the past. Rather than an attendance of on average 75 parents and students, over 300 showed up! It really shows the strength of our community and school system. We take being a reading community seriously! Beth and I engaged students with storytimes and literacy games while parents worked with school staff to learn more about supporting literacy in their homes with their children.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Barritt
Branch Manager

Revenue

We have received 90% of our budgeted Property Tax revenue as of 2/29/24. With more revenue already received in March, as of this writing on 3/11 we are at 94.3% and I expect to receive a couple more payments over the next week, after which time each township will send reports regarding unpaid balances to the County, who will then disburse the remaining to us, usually in late April. In February we received \$9,534 for the Northland Library Cooperative Enhancement Grant for East Bay shelving and staff attendance at April's Public Library Association conference taking place in Columbus, Ohio. We have received half our State Aid for Talking Book Library, and have received funds for Local Community Stabilization. Our Overdue and Replacement Fees are coming in higher than YTD budget, as are Sales and Meeting Room rentals. Donations tend to come in waves and to date we have not received many. Lastly, some of our investments declined in value as many of our Federal Home Loans and Treasury Notes declined in Market Value.

Expenditures

Note that percentage of budget completed is 16.67% as of 2/29/24. Line item details of note are below.

- Personnel*

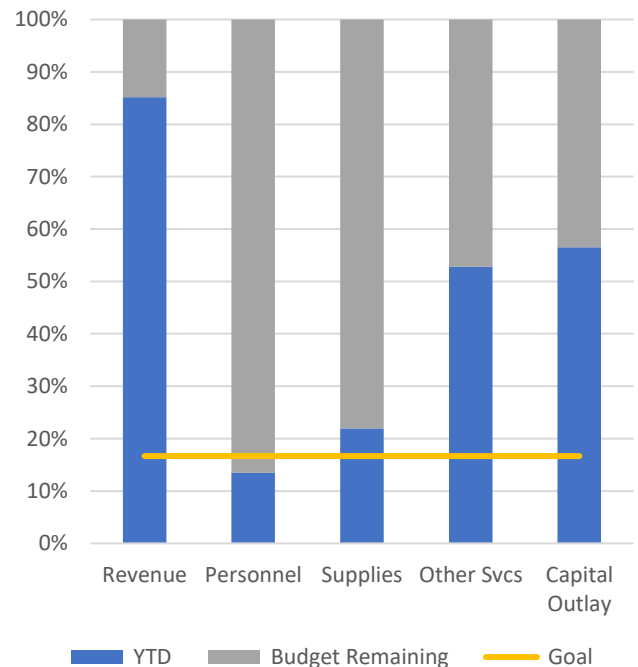
Our Goal percentages are different for this category with all payroll related line items (Salaries, FICA, retirement) having goals of 11.5% and all health benefits having goals of 25%. We are meeting these YTD goals well.
- Supplies*

A large portion of our Materials/Database budget was prepaid last year and therefore recognized in '24. We purchased more book leasing units from our vendor McNaughton to meet circulation needs and most of our periodicals have been purchased for the year. In the Maintenance Supplies line item, we incurred expenses for bathroom remodel items, namely some very nice baby changing tables as well as dispensers for menstrual hygiene products. The tables and dispensers will be available in all public bathrooms.
- Other Services/Charges*

Insurance and Member Library Allocations have been paid in full this year with line item percentages reflecting such. Payments in 2023 for various software and self-check equipment rentals were prepaid and recognized in 2024's YTD expenses, so this tends to weight our percentage of Budget Used higher at the beginning of each fiscal year but it evens out as the year progresses.
- Capital Outlay*

The final payment was made for the purchase of our server room mini split that was installed in 2023. This expense has been accrued back to the '23 budget.

TADL Budget as of 2/29/2024



Respectfully submitted,
Danielle Baldwin
Finance and Human Resources Manager



RevenueCategory;SubCategor...	Original Total Budget	Current Total Budget	Period Activity	Fiscal Activity	Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)	Percent Used
Revenue						
400 - Property Taxes - Current/Delinquent/Pilt	6,155,304.00	6,155,304.00	2,460,105.69	5,545,022.21	-610,281.79	90.09%
500 - Grants - Federal/State/Other	29,450.00	29,450.00	9,534.00	11,796.50	-17,653.50	40.06%
540 - State Aid Grant - Library	107,468.39	107,468.39	0.00	0.00	-107,468.39	0.00%
541 - State Aid Grant - TBL	41,073.00	41,073.00	20,536.00	20,536.00	-20,537.00	50.00%
581 - Penal Fines	150,900.00	150,900.00	0.00	0.00	-150,900.00	0.00%
602 - Fees/Services	29,650.00	29,650.00	17,000.00	17,000.00	-12,650.00	57.34%
607 - Overdue Fines/Replacement Fees	18,000.00	18,000.00	2,331.28	4,779.52	-13,220.48	26.55%
642 - Sales	22,650.00	22,650.00	2,650.27	5,479.94	-17,170.06	24.19%
653 - Meeting Room Rental/Equip Fees	2,000.00	2,000.00	200.00	600.00	-1,400.00	30.00%
665 - Interest & Gains/Losses	7,500.00	7,500.00	-3,905.86	4,210.63	-3,289.37	56.14%
674 - Donations/Contributions	26,200.00	26,200.00	409.73	955.27	-25,244.73	3.65%
676 - Misc Revenue & Reimbursements	505.00	505.00	253.99	1,619.09	1,114.09	320.61%
Revenue Total:	6,590,700.39	6,590,700.39	2,509,115.10	5,611,999.16	-978,701.23	85.15%
Expense						
Category: 70 - Personnel						
700 - Salaries & Wages	2,839,018.45	2,839,018.45	210,698.18	308,160.17	2,530,858.28	10.85%
710 - Social Security/Medicare	64,850.22	64,850.22	4,990.35	7,294.23	57,555.99	11.25%
712 - Medical Insurance	457,387.50	457,387.50	30,048.63	137,983.93	319,403.57	30.17%
713 - Dental Insurance	27,149.51	27,149.51	2,179.87	6,691.26	20,458.25	24.65%
715 - Vision Insurance	4,078.20	4,078.20	310.08	1,091.92	2,986.28	26.77%
716 - Life Insurance	9,397.40	9,397.40	757.09	2,229.55	7,167.85	23.73%
717 - Disability Insurance	16,268.03	16,268.03	1,342.95	3,955.89	12,312.14	24.32%
720 - 401K Retirement Contribution	131,106.14	131,106.14	8,649.33	12,665.25	118,440.89	9.66%
721 - MERS Defined Contribution Retirement	185,086.79	185,086.79	14,180.57	20,863.91	164,222.88	11.27%
722 - MERS DB Unfunded Liability	120,000.00	120,000.00	10,000.00	20,000.00	100,000.00	16.67%
723 - Worker's Compensation	8,300.00	8,300.00	0.00	0.00	8,300.00	0.00%
Category: 70 - Personnel Total:	3,862,642.24	3,862,642.24	283,157.05	520,936.11	3,341,706.13	13.49%
Category: 72 - Supplies						
728 - General Operating Supplies	217,350.00	217,350.00	15,039.13	29,334.96	188,015.04	13.50%
736 - Repair & Maintenance Supplies	16,750.00	16,750.00	12,008.01	12,662.35	4,087.65	75.60%
741 - Books/Media/Online Resources/LoT	749,705.00	749,705.00	79,752.64	173,825.86	575,879.14	23.19%
Category: 72 - Supplies Total:	983,805.00	983,805.00	106,799.78	215,823.17	767,981.83	21.94%
Category: 80 - Other Services and Charges						
801 - Professional & Contractual Services	336,360.00	336,360.00	22,395.51	99,663.40	236,696.60	29.63%
804 - Advertising & Outreach	43,500.00	43,500.00	674.60	1,272.52	42,227.48	2.93%
807 - Insurance & Bonds	30,574.49	30,574.49	27,887.00	28,337.00	2,237.49	92.68%
809 - General Equip/Building/Grounds Maintenance	328,730.00	328,730.00	27,969.40	46,467.76	282,262.24	14.14%
850 - Communications	28,500.00	28,500.00	1,696.79	6,172.42	22,327.58	21.66%
921 - Utilities	114,800.00	114,800.00	8,497.80	9,784.09	105,015.91	8.52%
955 - Education & Travel	129,947.66	129,947.66	3,946.93	8,081.07	121,866.59	6.22%
959 - Member Library Allocations	718,841.00	718,841.00	0.00	718,841.00	0.00	100.00%
961 - Misc	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00%
964 - Property Tax Reimbursements	6,500.00	6,500.00	0.00	0.00	6,500.00	0.00%
Category: 80 - Other Services and Charges Total:	1,739,253.15	1,739,253.15	93,068.03	918,619.26	820,633.89	52.82%
Category: 97 - Capital Outlay						
971 - Capital Furniture/Equipment/Building	5,000.00	5,000.00	11,241.50	2,825.00	2,175.00	56.50%
Category: 97 - Capital Outlay Total:	5,000.00	5,000.00	11,241.50	2,825.00	2,175.00	56.50%
Expense Total:	6,590,700.39	6,590,700.39	494,266.36	1,658,203.54	4,932,496.85	25.16%
Report Surplus (Deficit):	0.00	0.00	2,014,848.74	3,953,795.62	3,953,795.62	0.00%



MARCH 2024 DIRECTOR'S REPORT – VICTORIA SHURLY

The Board and Staff of PCL are sad to announce that PCL Board Trustee and Vice President, Lori Brickman, passed away March 3 unexpectedly. Lori had served on the Board since 2017 and saw the library through many changes including the construction of and move to the new building. Lori will be missed more than words can say. We will be hanging a plaque in her honor in the library in gratitude for all she has done.

Only 6 tickets remain for our 18th annual Books at the Boathouse fundraiser scheduled for April 22. Tickets are \$125 per person, available at PCL and include wine, appetizer, salad, main entrée and dessert. All funds earned support PCL. A live auction will be hosted by UpNorthLive news anchor Marc Schollett. Items offered include a gourmet meal prepared in your home and served with wine pairings for you and your guests, an afternoon sail with wine and appetizers, a feature article on your family in the Old Mission Gazette and more. Several hand turned wooden pieces will be auctioned including a bowl by Traverse Area District Library Board member Paul Deyo.

Our spring snail mail newsletter was sent out to 3800 households on Old Mission and to others by request. It is published quarterly.

March is Reading Month and patrons are invited to pick up a READING BINGO card at PCL. Read up, down, sideways or diagonally and turn the card in at PCL for a sweet treat. Old Mission Peninsula School students are participating as well!

Versiti hosted a blood drive at PCL February 14. 20 pints of blood were collected. The drive is held quarterly at PCL and patrons have expressed appreciation for not having to drive to town to donate. The next drive is set for June 19. The link to sign up is on our website at www.peninsulacommunitylibrary.org

Our goal this summer is to make the walking trail around our 5.25 acres, already approved on our SUP, a reality. Siler's Lawn Service will be mowing the trail around the perimeter of the property. Signs will be posted requiring people to clean up after their pets. The trail will not be maintained in the winter.

PCL Fun Fact: The land that PCL sits on was purchased in 1990. The library build started in 2018 and we moved in September 2019. Good things to come to those who wait!

Circulation Feb 2024 1647 + 72 manual checkouts, Feb 2023: 1824

Feb Volunteers: 16 people (0 teens), 32 hours of time to PCL

Curbside pickups: 2. Home delivery: 0. New library cards: 7

Hold Transit Counts Feb: 689 to other libraries from PCL, 299 from other libraries to PCL

Programs Feb: 17 Participation Feb: 208 Reference Questions: 317

Website Hits: Not available this month Twilight Baby Bags: 0, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten: 3

Meeting Room Reservations: Wireless & computer users 106

PENINSULA COMMUNITY LIBRARY 2893 ISLAND VIEW ROAD, TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49686 231-223-7700

www.peninsulacommunitylibrary.org

Like us on Facebook – Peninsula Community Library



TRAVERSE AREA
DISTRICT
LIBRARY

**Board of Library Trustees Regular Meeting
Library Director Report
Meeting Date March 21, 2024**

Library Activity

For a graphical presentation of the statistical information included below, please visit the link: [online TADL dashboard](#).

Year to Date Circulation Activity			
<u>End of Month</u>	<u>Print/Audio/Video</u>	<u>Electronic Books/Audio/Video</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
February 2023	170,009	49,510	219,519
February 2024	165,175	63,294	228,469

Lending

Physical Circulation is down by 3% from last year. Last month physical lending was down by 6%. I think the new limit of 100 is helping to increase circulation.

Visitors – Woodmere, East Bay, and Kingsley Facilities

In February, there were 29,896 visitors for East Bay, Kingsley and the Main library. The busiest day for February was Tuesday, the 20th, with 1,166 visitors. In February 2024, TADL welcomed 274 new patrons district-wide.

Public Computing

In February, there were 2,073 sessions as opposed to 1,663 in 2023.

Additions to the Collection

In February 2024, 3,373 items were added to the district.

Behavior Issues

There were 16 incidents in February 2024 resulting in 9 suspensions. These suspensions were from abusive behavior toward staff, assaulting a police officer, alcohol, and intoxication in the library.

Book Banning

- The proposed bill to prohibit book banning in Michigan is in limbo because of vacancies in the House. It will hopefully be introduced in April. You can learn more about other bills relating to libraries at <https://www.milibraries.org/bill-tracker>.

- The American Library Association (ALA) is reporting that book censorship took a giant leap in 2023 to 4,240 titles. According to the ALA, the number of titles targeted for censorship at public libraries increased 92% over previous years.

Organizational Involvement

- Joined the Michigan Library Association Strategic Planning Committee.
- Working as Treasurer with Northland Library Cooperative to follow new laws.

March Outreach, Partnership & Community Activities

Purposeful Partnerships

- I am helping with 2025 Rotary Gala and information from our Local History Collection.

Innovative Engagement

- Attended Josh's Tai Chi class.
- Helped at Coffee with a Cop by Melissa and Andy.
- Heather Brady and I were interviewed by a Northern Express reporter.

Community Outreach

- Attended City Commission meeting regarding Safe Harbor.
- Hosted the Safe Harbor Community meeting.

Happy Reading Month!

Michele P. Howard, MILS



AGENDA

Board of Trustees Study Session & Retreat
Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 12:00pm
Kingsley Branch Library
213 S. Brownson., Kingsley, MI 49649

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Public Comment***
5. **Warm-up Exercise**
6. **Discussion Topics**
 - a. Millage Update
 - b. The “Why” of What We Do
 - Video: Cultivating Good Community
 - Technology’s Role
 - c. Resources for Growth
7. **Public Comment***
8. **Adjournment**

* If you wish to speak during the Public Comment section of the meeting, please (1) wait until you are recognized; (2) approach the podium and use the microphone; (3) state your name and the county and township or city in which you reside; and (4) limit your comments to 3 minutes. Please sign in at the podium.

BOARD MEMO

TO: TADL BOARD

FROM: MICHELE P HOWARD, MILS

SUBJECT: EXPENDITURE FROM PIF THE BATHROOM RENOVATION

DATE: 3/15/24

On September 21, 2023, the Board of Trustees approved spending not to exceed more than \$288,450 for a contract with Spence Brothers for the renovation of seven (7) bathrooms at the Main Library.

Additional expenses have arisen. They are:

ADA accessible power doors and electrical	\$13876
Changing tables	\$6,993.00
<u>Aunt Flo Menstrual Products</u>	<u>\$3,940.00</u>
Total	\$24,809

Suggested Motion: To pay additional expenses for the bathroom renovation out of the Public Improvement Fund for the not to exceed amount of \$25,000.

Pluie, Inc.
3028 Rolling Wood Ln
Keller, TX 76248 US
www.hellopluie.com



INVOICE

BILL TO
Traverse Area District Library

SHIP TO
Traverse Area District Library

INVOICE # 200133
DATE 02/09/2024
DUE DATE 03/10/2024
TERMS Net 30

DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
Pluie Diaper Changing Table Non-UV	7	999.00	6,993.00
Delivery of Pluie Changing Table	7	0.00	0.00

SUBTOTAL	6,993.00
TAX	0.00
TOTAL	6,993.00
BALANCE DUE	USD 6,993.00

Thank you for your business. ACH payments are preferred. Please contact pluie@trw-financial.com for bank and remittance instructions.



Aunt Flow
757 Garden Road Suite 205
Columbus OH 43214
United States
Email: orders@goauntflow.com

Invoice

#INV9449

2/12/2024

Bill To

Bret Boulter
Traverse Area District Library
610 Woodmere Avenue
Traverse City MI 49686
United States

Ship To

Bret Boulter
Traverse Area District Library
610 Woodmere Avenue
Traverse City MI 49686
United States

AMOUNT DUE

\$3,940.00

Due Date: 2/27/2024

Terms

Net 15

Shipping Method

LTL

Tracking Number

RL:138429666

PO #

2402028

Sales Rep

Ben Weiner

Created From

Sales Order #S09422

Qty	Units	Product	SKU	Unit Price	Amount
4	Ea	Dispenser Model R Recessed Pad/Tampon Dispenser Model R Recessed Pad/Tampon	AF-DISP-REC-1	\$450.00	\$1,800.00
4	Ea	Dispenser Dual Display Box Pad/Tampon Dispenser Dual Display Box Pad/Tampon	AF-DISP-BOX-1	\$20.00	\$80.00
4	500 Count	Pad Cartridge Vertical Cartridge Pads	AF-PADS-CTRVERT	\$135.00	\$540.00
4	500 Count	Tampon Cartridge Applicator Cartridge Applicator Tampons	AF-TAMP-APLCTRG	\$135.00	\$540.00
2	Ea	Disposal Unit Continuous Liner Bag Refills 10ct Touch Free Disposal Unit Continuous Liner Bag 10 ct	AF-TCHFEE-BAGS-10	\$45.00	\$90.00
4	Ea	Disposal Unit Touch Free Touch Free Disposal Unit (Battery operated, contains 1 roll of continuous liner bag)	AF-TCHFEE-HW-1	\$150.00	\$600.00
1	Ea	Shipping Shipping	Shipping	\$290.00	\$290.00

Return Policy: Due to the nature of Aunt Flow products, all orders are final, and there are no refunds, returns, or exchanges. Supplier has no obligation to accept returns of products or issue refunds. If products are damaged or do not meet your expectations, please fill out the contact form at <https://goauntflow.com/contact-us/> and we will respond.

Subtotal \$3,940.00

Shipping

Tax Total (6%) \$0.00

Total QTY 23

Total \$3,940.00

Amount Due \$3,940.00

Restroom Expense
Acct Costing 101-790.111-736



Dept Head _____
Director _____



INV9449

2402028



1101 Hammond Rd W
Traverse City, MI 49686

Proposal

18488

Northern Michigan Glass
1101 Hammond Rd W
Traverse City, MI 49686
P 231-941-0050
F 231-941-2251

		DATE:	3/4/2024
TO:	PROJECT NAME	NMG REP:	
TRAVERSE CITY LIBRARY 610 WOODMERE TRAVERSE CITY MI 49686	ADA Operators/Restrooms	MIKE	
	Phone: 231-932-8522	Fax: 231-932-8538	
WE ARE PLEASED TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL:			Total
FURNISH AND INSTALL 4) ADA HORTON 47100 LE LOW ENERGY OPERATORS WITH REMOTE PUSH PADS. CLEAR ANODIZED HEADERS.			9,890.00
NOTE: 120 VAC POWER TO HEADERS BY OTHERS.			
NO TAX, LIBRARY WILL SEND CURRENT EXCEPTION FORM.			
TOTAL			\$9,890.00
PLEASE NOTE THAT AN EXACT COLOR MATCH CANNOT BE GUARANTEED ON ANY LOW-E PRODUCTS.			
ALL ESTIMATES ARE GOOD FOR 30 DAYS. THERE IS A 4% SURCHARGE IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD.			
DUE TO VARIANCES IN NATURAL GAS COST TO THE GLASS MANUFACTURERS, THIS PROPOSAL IS BASED ON _____ SQUARE FEET OF GLASS WITH AN ENERGY SURCHARGE OF _____% UPON ORDERING GLASS FOR THE PROJECT A COPY OF THE CURRENT SURCHARGE WILL BE PROVIDED AND OUR CONTRACT MAY BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.			
THIS PROPOSAL IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE IF NOT ACCEPTED WITHIN 30 DAYS.			
PAYMENT TO BE MADE AS FOLLOWS: NET 30 DAYS, PRICE REFLECTS PAYMENT WITH CASH OR CHECK. ADD 4% IF PAID BY CREDIT CARD. 1 1/2% CARRYING CHARGE FOR ALL PAST DUE CHARGES, INCLUDING LEGAL FEES.			
ALL WORK IS TO BE COMPLETED IN A WORKMANLIKE MANNER ACCORDING TO STANDARD PRACTICES. ANY ALTERATION OR DEVIATION FROM ABOVE SPECIFICATIONS INVOLVING EXTRA COST S WILL BE EXECUTED ONLY UPON WRITTEN ORDERS AND WILL BECOME AN EXTRA CHARGE OVER AND ABOVE THIS ESTIMATE			
Mfg warranty applies. No employee is authorized to alter the mfg's warranty. Errors of a clerical nature are subject to revision. We hereby guarantee all workmanship and materials against defects for a period of one full year after substantial completion. Items of work found defective during the warranty period will be replaced at no cost to the owner. This warranty does not cover any product which has been subject to abuse, alteration, neglect, misuse, abnormal use, accident, fire, war, or acts of God.	Authorized Signature	<i>Michael Braden</i>	
	Submitted by:		
WORK WILL COMMENCE UPON RECEIPT OF SIGNED ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL.	Signature:	<i>Michele P Howard</i>	
The above prices, specifications, and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. Northern Michigan Glass is authorized to do the work as specified. Payment will be made as indicated above.	Printed Name:	Michele P Howard	
Date of Acceptance:	3/5/24		

March 13, 2024

Bret Boulter
Traverse Area District Library
610 Woodmere Ave.
Traverse City, MI 49686

Dear Bret,

PROJECT: Woodmere Ave. Library Facility
SUBJECT: Public bathroom power operated door openers
PROPOSAL #: MTF24-035R1

Thank you for considering Windemuller as the preferred contractor to add power for the public bathrooms power door openers. Our proposal includes the following:

- Run a 120-volt circuit from an existing nearby power panel for a new 120-volt 20-amp circuit for each door operator.
- Installation of all door openers and door hardware to be by others.

Terms:

1. Our proposal is valid for 20 days.

Base Bid Total: **\$ 3,986.00**
Three thousand nine hundred eighty-six dollars and no 00/100

Please feel free to call and discuss our proposal in further detail. Please sign, date, and return a copy to me.

Sincerely,



Matthew Feenstra
Account Manager

Accepted By _____
Printed Name _____
Purchase Order _____
Date _____



A student makes reading progress during a one-on-one tutoring session through Literacy Mid-South. Applicants often face a monthslong waitlist.

Education

A Fifth of American Adults Struggle to Read. Why Are We Failing to Teach Them?

The nation's approach to adult education has so far neglected to connect the millions of people struggling to read with the programs set up to help them.

by Annie Waldman, Aliya Swaby and Anna Clark, with additional reporting by Nicole Santa Cruz, photography by Kathleen Flynn, special to ProPublica

Dec. 14, 2022, 5 a.m. EST

ProPublica is a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power. Sign up to receive [our biggest stories](#) as soon as they're published.

In Amite County, Mississippi, where a third of adults struggle to read, evidence of America's silent literacy crisis is everywhere.

It's in a storefront on Main Street, in the fading mill town of Gloster, where 80-year-old Lillie Jackson helps people read their mail. "They can't comprehend their bills," she said. "So many of them are ashamed that they haven't finished grade school." She longs for the day she can retire, but she doesn't want to abandon her neighbors. "That's the only reason I really stay open," she said.

It's in the Greentree Lumber mill, where dozens of residents cut Southern yellow pine into boards, but supervisors — who must be able to page through machine guides and safety manuals — are recruited from other counties. "We're going to have demand for jobs with no people to supply them," mill accountant Pam Whittington said.



Lillie Jackson helps a customer pay bills from her business on Main Street in Gloster, Mississippi. Greentree Lumber mill in Liberty, Mississippi.

And it's in the local high school, in a district where a fifth of students drop out, one of the highest rates in the state. Principal Warren Eyster has seen low literacy trickle from one generation to the next — an unusually American phenomenon.

In other wealthy countries, adults with limited education who were born into families with little history of schooling are twice as likely to surpass their parents' literacy skills. Here, one's destiny is uniquely entrenched. Though nationwide graduation rates have risen in recent decades, the number of adults who struggle to read remains stubbornly high: 48 million, or 23%.

If there were local programs that could teach adults the reading skills they never got, those parents could help educate their kids and get better jobs, Eyster said. The entire county would benefit: "Our tax base would go up," he said. But in Amite County, no such program exists.



Amite County High School Principal Warren Eyster believes his community would benefit from an adult education program.

In a nation whose education system is among the most unequal in the industrialized world, where race and geography play an outsize role in determining one's path to success, many Americans are being failed twice: first, by public schools that lack qualified teachers, resources for students with disabilities and adequate reading instruction; and next, by the backup system intended to catch those failed by the first.

Nearly 60 years ago, the federal government established funding to provide free education for adults who could not read to help them improve their literacy and obtain employment. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson recognized how low literacy intertwined with poverty and all the ills that came with it. The adult education system they built was supposed to give people everywhere a second chance at success.

But, ProPublica found, access to this instruction is limited, increasingly insufficient and — much like the nation's school systems — highly dependent on geography and the political will of elected officials.

The federal government provided roughly \$675 million to states for adult education last year, an amount that's been relatively unchanged for more than two decades when adjusted for inflation. It's not enough, and states that oversee these programs are required to commit their own share of funding. A review of adult education spending found glaring disparities among states, with some investing more than four times as much as others for each eligible student.

"The magnitude of the need for adult education services has long eclipsed Congressional appropriations," a U.S. Department of Education spokesperson said in an emailed statement. "Funding levels have not kept pace with the rising cost of service delivery, nor are funding levels commensurate with the millions of people who could benefit from adult education services."

ProPublica reporters interviewed dozens of students and adult education workers in states that historically have contributed some of the least funding. We found that in some states, programs keep adults on waitlists, unable to meet demand. Some students succeed in these programs, but many drop out within weeks or months, before they are able to make progress. Students often find themselves in overstuffed classes led by uncertified part-time or volunteer teachers.

Resources are scant. An adult education manager at Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Mississippi said she can't afford enough practice exams. The supervisor of Nevada's programs, unable to hire enough teachers, worries about having to put students on waitlists. And most programs across the country lack the specialized staff to help adults with learning disabilities that public schools failed to have diagnosed.

In fact, the entire system is set up to prioritize students who can quickly graduate with a high school or work credential, often leaving behind those who need more time to overcome greater reading gaps.

Programs that offer more personalized assistance frequently say they can only do so with private support.

Vast swaths of some states are literacy deserts, lacking any government-run adult education classes. This is the case for about a fifth of Mississippi counties, where hundreds of thousands of people live. Students are forced to cross county lines to attend classes or forgo them altogether. "In an ideal world, each county would have a physical location where adult education classes are offered," said Kell Smith, the interim executive director of the state's Community College Board, which oversees adult education. "However, due to financial constraints, this is not possible." ([Read the full response here.](#)) Gov. Tate Reeves did not respond to a request for comment.

Many counties that lack programs also double as hot spots of low adult literacy. These are primarily in the mountains of Appalachia, the Southern Black Belt, the Central Valley of California and along the Texas border with Mexico, but they exist throughout the nation. In about 500 American counties, nearly a third of adults struggle to read basic English, according to ProPublica's analysis of federal literacy data. These adults may have a basic vocabulary and be able to interpret short texts, but their reading comprehension may be limited beyond that.

In communities with lower literacy, personal challenges magnify into collective crises. In Detroit, for example, former police Chief James Craig recalled how, in their coursework, academy recruits from poorly performing schools had the most trouble with reading. It was harder for them to complete the program, he said, which added to the recruitment challenges faced by the police in Detroit and other cities.

Back in Amite County, Cartina Knox, 50, said she'd jump at the chance to learn what she missed after dropping out of school in ninth grade. But the nearest program is 30 miles away, and she can't afford a car to get there. "They need places like that out here," she said.

Standing before a sea of glaring television lights in the packed congressional chamber, President Kennedy exposed an invisible epidemic, reflected in the rates of military rejections, welfare enrollment and

incidents of crime.

Millions of Americans were “functionally illiterate,” Kennedy told the nation during his 1962 State of the Union address. In the distinctive clip of his Boston accent, he called for a “massive attack to end this adult illiteracy,” marking a shift from decades of limited and sporadic federal action.

“The economic result of this lack of schooling is often chronic unemployment, dependency or delinquency,” he later told lawmakers. “The twin tragedies of illiteracy and dependency are often passed on from generation to generation.”

President Johnson soon delivered on this call to action, launching the nation’s first federal adult education program as part of his War on Poverty. The goal: Educate Americans whose inability to read or write kept them impoverished and out of the workforce.

The federal government covered the vast majority of costs for free, state-run adult literacy classes. The funds were initially limited to basic instruction, excluding high school credential programs. As the effort expanded, the government mandated that states recruit adults with the highest literacy needs and urged programs to help with transportation and child care. Buoyed by federal funds, enrollment that started at 38,000 in 1965 soared to a peak of about 4 million by 1996.

But in more recent years, fundamental shifts in the program’s goals and funding impeded its success.

The adult education system began to morph into what is now effectively a credentialing program largely aimed at pumping out students with high-school equivalency or workforce certificates. The federal government started tracking student gains as a way to measure performance. States can use these indicators to determine local funding levels or even eliminate funding to programs not meeting high enough standards. This shift led programs to prioritize more advanced students, often at the expense of those originally envisioned by Kennedy: adults who lacked basic reading skills and needed more help.

“The purpose of these programs is no longer to provide literacy education. That is not what they do anymore,” said Amy Pickard, an assistant professor of education at Indiana University Bloomington.

All the while, as federal funding stagnated, states were called on to put up more money or risk atrophying their programs. National enrollment has careened down to only 700,000 students last year. Despite the country’s immense need, less than 3% of eligible adults receive services.



Jacqueline Davis in front of her home in Memphis. She was kept out of school as a child.

By the time Jacqueline Davis sought reading help, the system was no longer built to serve her. The 62-year-old lives in Shelby County, Tennessee — home to Memphis — where more than a quarter of adults struggle to read. Her father, who was traumatized by a racist assault he experienced as a child, kept her out of school. He read history books to her but didn’t provide any formal instruction. As an adult, Davis stumbled over large words and grammar. Her low reading level made chores out of basic tasks. At the doctor’s office,

she had to ask for help filling out intake forms, and she later looked up unfamiliar words in the privacy of her home.

For most of her life, Davis worked as a cashier at places like Popeyes and Kmart, which sometimes required applicants to have a high school credential. She usually lied on the forms so they would hire her, she said. To her knowledge, no one found out. She dreamed of running a small produce business, sustaining herself with what she could grow with some dirt and her own hands. But her inability to fill out hiring or grant paperwork stopped her.



A family portrait taken in the mid-'80s shows Davis, left; her father, Samuel Gathing; and her daughters, Ginger Foster, right, and Mecca Stevenson.

More than a decade ago, Davis signed up for free classes with Messick Adult Center in East Memphis — one of the few in the county at the time. The program, like many across the nation, catered to adults who were close to getting a high school credential, not those who lack basic reading skills like she did. Davis tried to follow the lessons but quickly fell behind. “I just didn’t have the foundation,” she said. “My writing skills are not good, my spelling is not good.”

Her daughter, Mecca Stevenson, recalls watching Davis struggle with homework, too proud to ask her children for help. She only found out her mother had dropped out when the center called their home phone to check on her. Years later, Tennessee shut the center down for failing to graduate enough adults with a high school credential. The state has since worked to improve the quality of instruction in adult education, including providing more training to teachers, according to Jay Baker, the assistant commissioner of adult education.

After she dropped out, Davis kept looking for other options, frustrated by her inability to keep up in a group setting but determined to find something that worked. Several years later, she saw a television advertisement encouraging adults to sign up for classes at the library. She enrolled in a program run by the nonprofit Literacy Mid-South, which provides one-on-one tutoring for adults with a sixth-grade reading level or less. It was exactly what she needed.

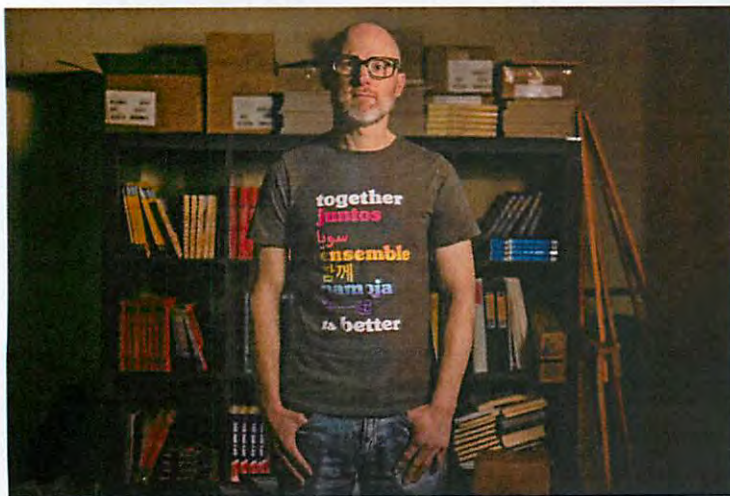


Davis reads with her grandsons before they head to school, first image, and fixes the hair of her mother, whom she cares for.

Over five years, her abilities and confidence have risen, as her tutor encouraged her to take apart long words and sound out each letter. She says the program has changed her life. “I’ve learned how to pronounce words and read words that I’ve never seen,” she said.

The difference: Literacy Mid-South is not part of the government’s adult education system, so it has more flexibility to help students at Davis’ level.

While it’s one of the only programs in Memphis offering free tutoring for adults like Davis, it doesn’t get federal or state funding to do so. Adult program coordinator Lee Chase said he hasn’t applied because his program doesn’t work the way those funded by the government do, pushing students to get their high school credentials as quickly as possible. “Our learners choose their goals and we don’t want to limit what those are,” he said.

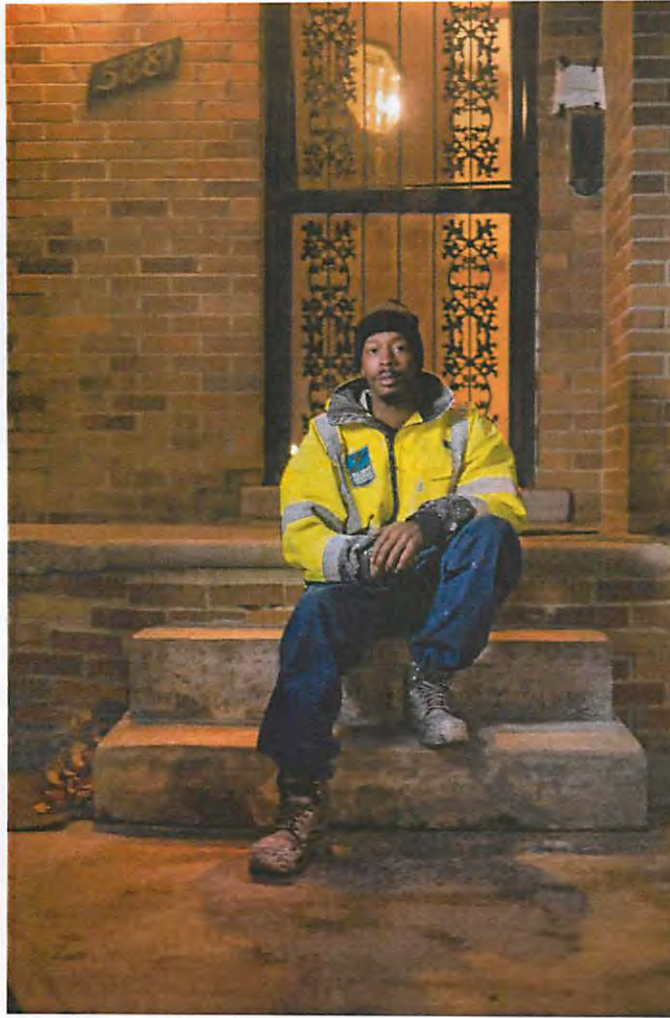


Lee Chase is the adult program coordinator of Literacy Mid-South, which provides one-on-one tutoring for adults with a sixth-grade reading level or less.

The lack of additional funding has hampered the program’s ability to grow. All tutors are volunteers, and only two employees receive salaries. Applicants often face a monthslong waitlist for a tutor.

“We’re just plugging holes in a lifeboat,” Chase said.

The nation’s approach to adult education has so far failed to connect the massive number of people struggling to read with the programs that could help them. ProPublica reporters heard time and again that in communities stricken with low literacy, programs had to close sites because not enough students had enrolled. Meanwhile, more than two dozen adults in these hot spots told us that a lack of transportation or child care or busy work schedules prohibited them from attending classes. As a result, many have fallen through the cracks.



Steven Binion couldn't get the kind of help he needed from Detroit's troubled schools.

For years, Steven Binion wanted to improve his reading level beyond the eighth grade. He didn't get the one-on-one help he had needed in Detroit's notoriously troubled schools. Then, he said, after family fights began to escalate, he left home at age 14. Knowing he would have to support himself, he soon dropped out. He survived for years on low-paying jobs: trimming lawns, sorting packages, working at factories. When he had a baby, his worries escalated as he struggled to afford diapers and shoes for his son's growing feet and couldn't rent an apartment for his family. He tried several times to attend education programs, but he couldn't sacrifice the time spent earning a paycheck.

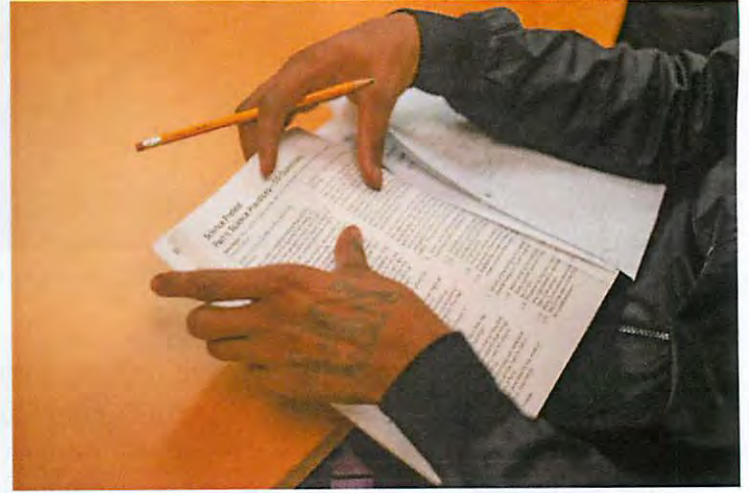
Meanwhile, Mayor Mike Duggan of Detroit was watching this pattern play out at scale. When he was elected in 2013, the city was bankrupt and nearly 1 in 5 adults were unemployed. Adults struggled to read — so many of them, generation after generation, that the city had grown to epitomize the nation's literacy crisis. While difficult to measure, low literacy estimates for Detroit and its surrounding county have ranged from more than a quarter to nearly half of all adult residents.

The lack of skilled workers stunted the city's ability to attract industrial investment. Middle-wage jobs all but disappeared. The city struggled to expand its tax base and maintain its public services. "At the time I got elected, the streetlights weren't on in the city and the ambulances didn't show up for an hour," Duggan told ProPublica. "It was pretty much nonfunctional."



Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan spearheaded a plan to increase the education of the city's residents.

The mayor realized that to interrupt this cycle, the city needed to better educate its residents. But even with the handful of literacy programs available, not enough adults were attending to make a meaningful difference. Too often, people like Binion couldn't balance learning with work. While the earlier vision of America's adult education system prioritized helping students overcome these barriers, many programs today cannot offer this support.



Eric Murrow, at left in the first image, is tutored in math by senior adult education manager Aubrey Williams as he prepares for a GED practice test. Deonte Ruff studies for a GED practice test at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Detroit.

Duggan and other city officials came up with an unprecedented plan, one that accounted for the city's responsibility in creating the crisis. They launched Skills for Life last year; unlike most municipal job programs, it pays participants to go to school. Two days a week, they can improve their reading abilities, prepare for high school credential exams or develop skills like masonry or electrical wiring. The other three days, the city employs participants either in blight remediation, clearing vacant lots or as park ambassadors, tending the city's green spaces. They're paid at least \$15 an hour — about \$5 more than the state minimum wage — for all five days. The city also provides assistance for participants without transportation or child care.

As many as 2,200 residents are expected to participate in Skills for Life over three years; it has up to \$75 million in funding committed through 2024.

"The first responsibility of government is to show folks who dropped out because they thought things were hopeless, who didn't learn to read because they thought there was no value — to show them there is a real and immediate benefit," Duggan said.

Relying on a temporary stream of pandemic aid dollars, the city pays local adult education programs to run the classes. Detroit is simultaneously addressing some of the root causes of the literacy crisis: With an

additional \$1.3 billion in federal relief funding, the school district is on its way to dramatically improving facilities and expanding literacy tutoring for children.

While it's too early to measure the success of the Skills for Life program, the mayor says he is confident that it will prove an integral part of Detroit's turnaround.

"By the end of 2024, we're going to be able to show definitively: Yes, you can fundamentally reduce poverty rates, raise literacy rates, raise income," said Duggan, who believes this could be a model for other communities. "At least so far, we're feeling very optimistic."

After searching online, Binion, now 32, came across Skills for Life. Though incredulous that it would provide him with paid time to learn alongside a city job, he showed up an hour early to the interview, he said, and was hired that day.



Binion takes part in Detroit's Skills for Life program.

Three days a week, he cleared the city's abandoned lots, and two days a week, he worked with a tutor through the nonprofit St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center. The city's program also set him on a path to earning a certificate in masonry, which will open up dozens of job opportunities. But first, he had to attain his high school credential.

Within months of starting the program, he passed the exam's science and math sections. But he stumbled on language arts, failing the section twice.

Without the encouragement of his tutors, Binion would have given up. But after several more months of the city paying him to learn, he passed.

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