ENGAGING VIRGINIA BEACH:

THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS, PROGRAMS & CITYWIDE CONNECTIONS



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH
Public Library

ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2024

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Greetings,

Fiscal Year 2024 was a year of renewed energy and growth for Virginia Beach Public Library. As our community's needs continued to evolve, we focused on expanding access, strengthening engagement, and meeting people wherever they are — whether that's inside our buildings or out in the community.

One of the most meaningful steps we took was eliminating overdue fines and opening free library card access to all residents of Virginia and Currituck County, North Carolina. This change, which began July 1, 2023, immediately removed barriers and reaffirmed our belief that the library should be welcoming and accessible to everyone. While fees for lost or damaged items still apply, we've already seen more people returning to the library and engaging with our services.

We also expanded hours to better match community routines. Pungo-Blackwater Library restored Friday hours for the first time since 2020, and Central Library reopened on Sundays, welcoming more than 700 visitors in the first month alone. These changes reflect our ongoing commitment to restoring and strengthening services that matter to residents.

Throughout the year, VBPL continued to grow as a place for learning, creativity and exploration. Technology programs and hands-on experiences expanded across the system, giving people of all ages opportunities to explore STEM and emerging tools. Our Summer Reading Challenge returned to pre-pandemic participation levels, highlighting the lasting importance of literacy, curiosity and shared community experiences.

Outreach remained at the heart of our work. We expanded embedded library services to seven locations, including senior living communities, where residents deeply appreciated the personalized collections and relationship-based support. Additional outreach efforts strengthened early learning, caregiver education and family engagement through partnerships with schools, community groups and City departments.

These efforts earned national recognition: VBPL received Pacesetter Honors from the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading for programs such as Libraries in Laundromats, StoryWalks and Virginia Beach Talks. This recognition underscores our role as a trusted partner in supporting early literacy and family success.

FY24 also gave us moments to celebrate our history and growth. The Joint-Use Library marked its 10th anniversary with more than 800 attendees, and Princess Anne Area Library celebrated 20 years of service with multigenerational programs and creative engagement activities. These milestones reflect both the longevity and evolution of library service in Virginia Beach.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to access, inclusion and meaningful community impact. I am deeply grateful to our staff for their dedication and creativity, and to our partners and residents for their continued support. Together, we are building a library system that grows alongside the community it serves.

Sincerely,
Kimberly B. Knight, Director
Virginia Beach Public Library

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

DIGITAL SERVICES

YOUTH SUCCESS

INCLUSION & ACCESS

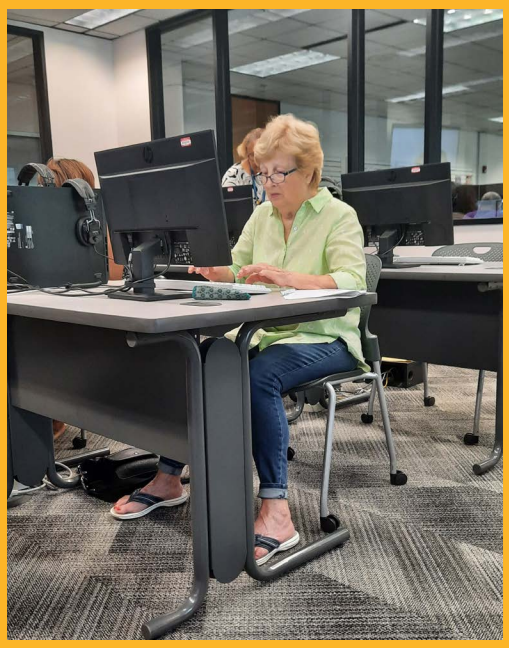
OUR VISION

Virginia Beach Public Library fosters an innovative, inclusive and engaged community.

OUR MISSION

We meet the lifelong needs of our diverse community by providing access to quality resources, engaging programs and welcoming spaces.





DIGITAL SERVICES

VBPL expanded its digital learning and technology engagement efforts, offering hands-on experiences for customers of all ages. Technology programming continued to grow, with events such as the Tech Petting Zoo and STEM-based youth activities that introduced participants to devices including Osmo, Ozobot, Sphero Mini, 3Doodler, Cubelets and Snap Circuits Jr.

To support skill-building and comfort with everyday technology, staff hosted Tech Help Days at community sites such as the Sullivan House, helping residents learn how to use devices, access online resources and build confidence in digital environments.

VBPL also prepared for the next phase of technology-enabled learning by unboxing, testing and cataloging new technology kits in July. Staff training followed in late summer, leading to a systemwide refresh of iPad Labs and the addition of 10 full-size iPads for programming.

In August 2023 our new website launched as part of a citywide website redesign to make the city and department websites cohesive and accessible to all customers. The update gave the website a fresh new look, improved navigation and new interactive tools.





718,201
ITEMS DOWNLOADED

1,717,816
ONLINE VISITS

CUSTOMERS BORROWED
83
ITEMS PER HOUR

YOUTH SUCCESS

SIGNATURE YOUTH PROGRAMS

1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

Dozens of families reached this major milestone, including a Great Neck Area Library customer who completed the program before turning two.

One Hour with a Librarian

VBPL launched One Hour with a Librarian, a new service providing personalized support for young readers and their families. Available for students in grades K–5 at Bayside Area Library, Central Library, Great Neck Area Library, Kempsville Area Library, Princess Anne Area Library and the Joint-Use Library, the program offers one-on-one time with a youth librarian to help children build confidence as readers and explore library resources. During these sessions, young readers receive guidance finding books at their reading level, discovering new titles that match their interests, learning how to locate similar materials in the library and practicing their reading skills in a supportive environment.



3,953
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS WITH
76,735
ATTENDEES

719
TEEN PROGRAMS WITH
8,752
ATTENDEES

24
ONE HOUR WITH A LIBRARIAN SESSIONS


VOLUNTEER


Meet Knut!


5th GRADE
Battle of Books
VB
CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH
Public Library


Cats Are Cats
Aa Bb Cc Dd
Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk
Mm Nn Oo Pp
Ww Xx Yy Zz


Outreach
Il House

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

9,688 READERS

JUNE - AUGUST 2023

VBPL's 2023 Summer Reading Challenge returned to pre-pandemic participation levels. More than **11,600 children** registered, and **77% completed** the challenge. Branches hosted themed events, and Kempsville earned top honors for the highest percentage increase in enrollments.





TITLE I PARTNERSHIP WITH VBCPS

During the Summer Reading Challenge, Virginia Beach Public Library visited **72 classrooms** at **15 Title I schools**, providing literacy-rich STEM programs for rising K–3 students. Lessons combined read-aloud, engineering concepts and collaborative building activities.

TEEN PROGRAMS

Battle of the Books

Fifty teams and 219 students participated in the citywide competition; the Middle School Edition celebrated its fifth year with 14 schools and three homeschool groups.

One Hour with a Librarian — Teen Support

VBPL also introduced One Hour with a Librarian for Teens, offering personalized support for students in grades 6–12. During these one-on-one sessions, teens can meet with a librarian to get help finding books that match their interests, discover new titles and authors, learn how to navigate library resources and receive guidance with research or school assignments. The service provides a welcoming space for teens to explore reading, build research skills and make the most of the library's collections and services.

Teen Advisory Groups, Service & Leadership

Teen-led initiatives included the annual holiday toy drive, and volunteer-driven service activities.

Teen Aquarium Night

More than 530 teens and their guests attended the popular after-hours event at the Virginia Aquarium featuring glow-in-the-dark face painting, karaoke and crafts.

Teen Mental Health Series

VBPL offered eight programs focused on emotional well-being, ending with a Tiny Art display featuring 167 canvases.

Career Exploration & Mentorship

VBPL launched an annual Career Exploration Series for seventh graders.





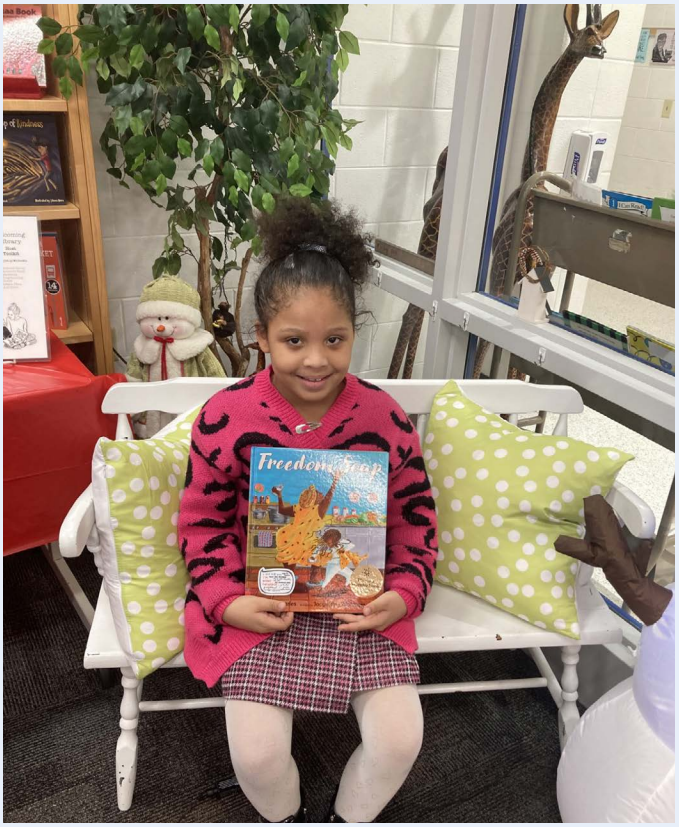






StoryWalk

VBPL launched its first permanent StoryWalk® installation at Williams Farm Park, made possible through support from the Friends of the Virginia Beach Public Library. StoryWalks — an innovative program originally created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont, in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library — display the pages of a children's book along a walking path, allowing families to read a story together one page at a time as they move through the park. By combining literacy, physical activity and time outdoors, StoryWalks encourage children and caregivers to build early reading skills while exploring community spaces. The Williams Farm Park installation provides a year-round opportunity for families to experience books beyond the library walls while promoting healthy, active learning for young readers.



Welcoming Library

The Welcoming Library is a traveling pop-up collection designed to spark conversations about immigration, belonging and inclusion. The collection features 30 carefully curated picture books highlighting the experiences of New Arrival and New American families, along with companion discussion questions that encourage thoughtful dialogue among students and educators. Designed to travel easily between locations, the Welcoming Library includes two crates — one containing the book collection and another with a portable display that showcases and celebrates the titles. During the year, VBPL circulated the Welcoming Library among six Title I schools, helping introduce young readers to stories that reflect diverse experiences while fostering understanding and empathy.

LIBRARIES SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING

VBPL hosted a wide range of programs supporting lifelong learning and community connection.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

Career Online High School: VBPL continued supporting adult learners through Career Online High School, an accredited program that allows adults to earn a high school diploma and career certificate online while receiving support from library staff and academic coaches. Participants gain credentials that help open doors to employment, further education and career advancement.

English Conversation Club which served 540 English Language Learners in FY24 with a variety of programs to support their language acquisition, including English Conversation Club, English Language Learners Book Club and Pronunciation Practice for English Language Learners. VBPL also partnered with the English Language Acquisition program at the Adult Learning Center to promote library resources to students and sign them up for library accounts.

The English Language Learners Book Club was made possible by the Library Foundation. Their funding helped VBPL purchase books that attendees could keep and take home to share with their families.

Readers Night Out which brought 60 participants together at Central Library for an evening of book discussions and social activities.

55
ENROLLMENTS

14
GRADUATES





The Edgar T. Brown Local History Archives at Meyera E. Oberndorf Central Library hosted **Moonlight Madness**, an after-hours research event offering patrons expanded access to genealogical and local history collections. Participants explored archival materials, received guided instruction on the Local History and Genealogy Network (LHGN) and worked directly with library staff for research assistance. The event provides a welcoming space for both beginning and experienced researchers to discover new insights into their family histories and the **history of Virginia Beach.**

The **Edgar T. Brown Local History Archives** preserves and provides access to materials documenting the history and development of Virginia Beach and the surrounding region. Its collections include historical photographs, manuscripts, maps, city records, newspapers and genealogical resources that support family history research and help preserve the community's shared story. Events like Moonlight Madness invite the public to explore these resources in a collaborative setting and discover new connections to the past.

"True Sons of Freedom" exhibit highlighting African American history and leadership.

Through a Virginia Beach Arts & Humanities Commission grant, VBPL hosted award-winning graphic novelist **Johnnie Christmas**, author of Swim Team. Fifty-seven attendees participated in an interactive workshop that included an author talk, drawing instruction and book signing.

Financial and practical skills workshops through the **Green Savers Project**, including programs on energy efficiency, EV charging, composting, and rain barrel construction. Green Savers participants **received free home energy kits** — 180 distributed — and circulating toolkits were added to the Library of Things for continued learning at home.



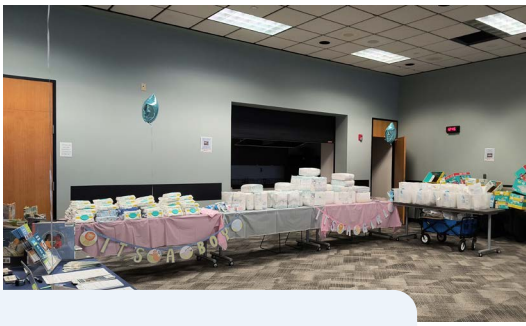


1,100
ADULT PROGRAMS WITH
10,617
ATTENDEES

216
GENERAL INTEREST PROGRAMS WITH
7,849
ATTENDEES

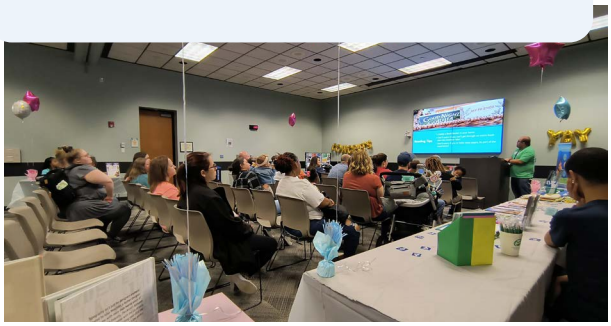
SPECIAL PARTNERSHIPS

VBPL EXPANDED COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACROSS THE CITY



Community Baby Shower: In partnership with local agencies and VB Elks Lodge 2268 VBPL hosted a **Stork Storytime and Community Baby Shower** to celebrate new and expectant families while connecting them with resources that support early childhood development and early literacy. In partnership with several community organizations, the event provided families with information, guidance and practical tools to help support their child's growth from the very beginning. Families participated in a special Stork Storytime that demonstrated how everyday activities, such as reading, talking, singing and playing help build the foundation for language development and lifelong learning, while community partners shared information about local services available to parents and caregivers. Each family also received a gift bag filled with essential items including books, toys, diapers, wipes and other supplies, helping ensure that families left the event with both the resources and knowledge needed to support their child's healthy development and early learning journey.

> "This was an awesome program, I'm so glad I went. I feel much more informed (& confident) on how to help my little girl with reading and learning when she arrives next month. Our library system is such an excellent resource for our community. Thank you!!"
>
> - Candace L.



Parks After Dark: Working with Parks & Recreation, VBPL provided STEAM activities during evening community events from June through August. Staff attended eight events and engaged more than **1,000 residents** through crafts, technology demonstrations and games.

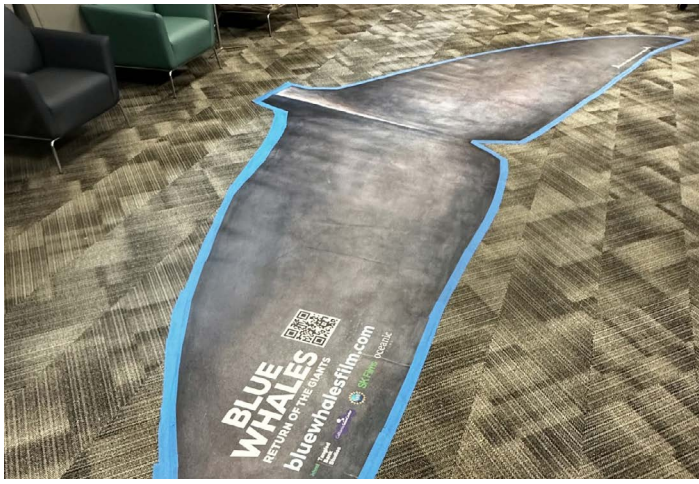








VBPL partnered with the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center to present **Whales on Our Shores: What Whale Strandings Are Teaching Us**, a community program exploring the science behind whale strandings along the Atlantic coast. The program featured an expert presentation, interactive crafts and educational activities that helped families understand how scientists investigate strandings and what these events can teach us about ocean health. By **connecting library programming with local environmental research**, the Whale Tail project offered customers of all ages a meaningful opportunity to explore marine science and learn more about the coastal ecosystem that shapes life in Virginia Beach.



WHRO Library Corner at Windsor Woods: A new early-literacy space featuring PBS Kids content and free books for children.



Senior Living Communities: Monthly visits offering art programs, curated collections, and social engagement.

Military Partnerships: USS George H.W. Bush sailors volunteered at the Joint-Use Library to support teen space improvements.



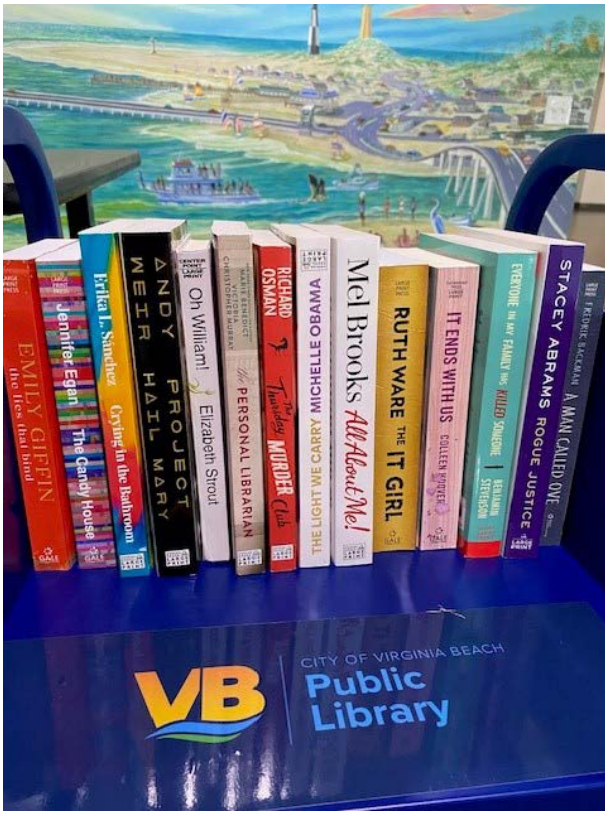


INCLUSION & ACCESS

Removing Barriers to Library Use

On July 1, 2023, VBPL **eliminated overdue fines and expanded free library card access to all residents of Virginia and Currituck County, NC.** Fees for lost or damaged materials still apply, but the change has already reduced access barriers for many community members.

The Pungo-Blackwater Library restored Friday hours for the first time since 2020, and Central Library resumed Sunday service, serving more than **700 customers in the first month.**



Embedded Libraries & Outreach for All Ages

VBPL expanded Embedded Library services to seven senior living communities. Rolling collections delivered to locations such as The Villages of Rosemont and Luther Manor provide residents with curated selections of materials and monthly visits from library staff. Residents enthusiastically welcomed the service, with some communities already creating weekly “book mobile” schedules for the carts.





BEHIND THE SCENES

"I'm truly appreciative for the invaluable resources and knowledgeable staff this library has to offer. I am always treated with kindness, patience, and respect whenever I visit."

- Tammy H., visting Central Library

AN AVERAGE OF **30**
PEOPLE WALK IN EVERY HOUR WE ARE OPEN

10
BRANCHES

26,243
HOURS OPEN

974,976
VISITS

1,717,816
ONLINE VISITS



2,342,520
ITEMS IN COLLECTION

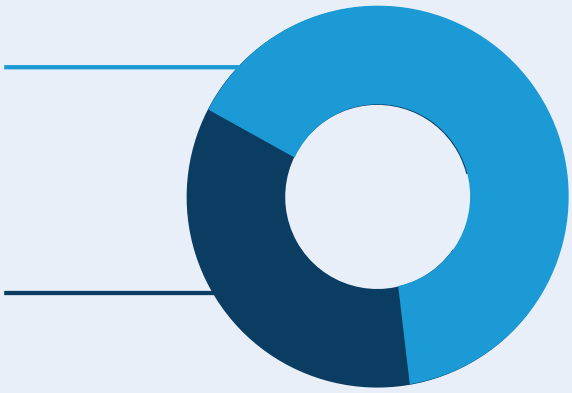
311,975
HOLDS PLACED

2,224
INTERLIBRARY LOAN TRANSACTIONS

2,184,928 TOTAL ITEMS CIRCULATED

1,466,727
PHYSICAL ITEMS CIRCULATED

718,201
ITEMS DOWNLOADED



NEW COLLECTIONS, AWARDS, ANNIVERSARIES & MILESTONES

Introduced **Nintendo Switch Kits** as part of the Lucky Day collection, now available at all branches.

Cataloged and deployed **new technology kits and updated iPad Labs** for active programming.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

VBPL and the City of Virginia Beach received **Pacesetter Honors** from the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading for programs including:

- Libraries in Laundromats
- StoryWalks
- Virginia Beach Talks caregiver education initiative







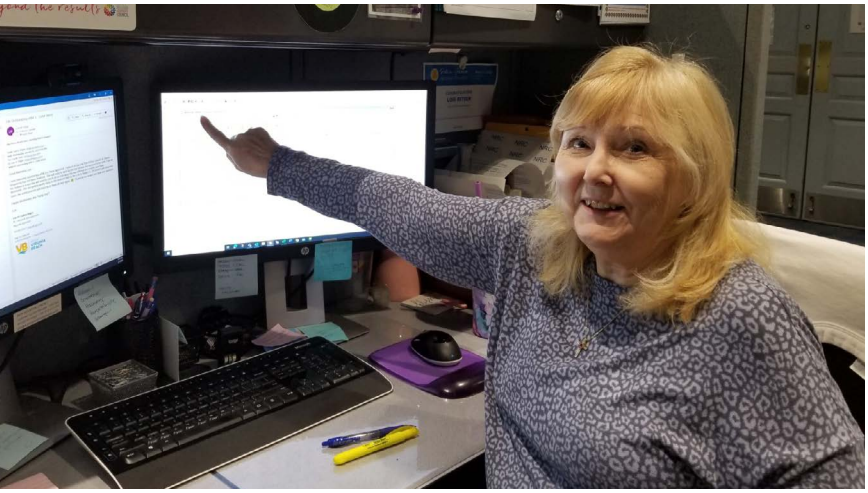


ANNIVERSARIES & MILESTONES

The Joint-Use Library celebrated its **10th anniversary** with more than **800 attendees** at a weekend celebration featuring community partners, demonstrations and family activities.

Princess Anne Area Library celebrated **20 year**s with multigenerational activities and a month-long digital scavenger hunt.

Records Management processed its **80,000th** Total Recall request, underscoring the department's vital role in protecting city information.

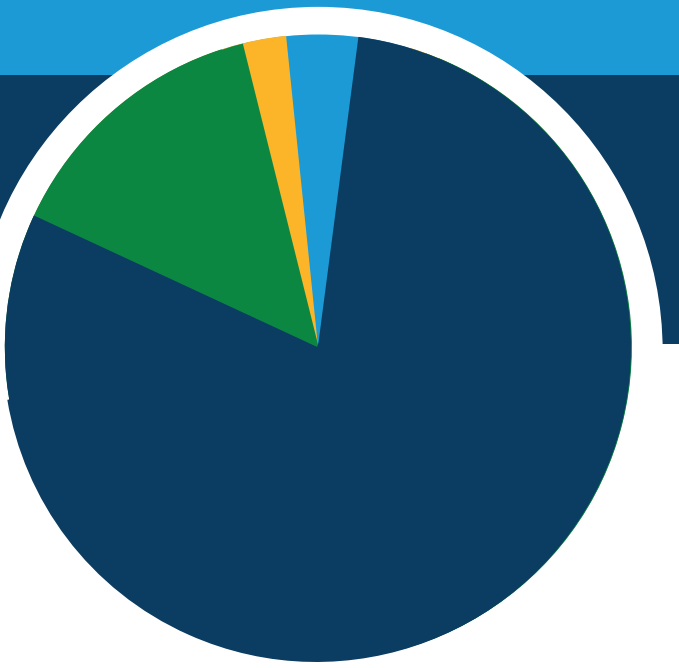


1,280
MEETING ROOM BOOKINGS

596,102
CUSTOMER QUESTIONS ANSWERED
(approximation based on quarterly tallies)

63,618
COMPUTER SESSIONS

VBPL's Budget
$21,500,154



- Salaries & Benefits **$17,154,249**
- Donations **$112,000**
- Operating Budget **$3,998,307**
- Law Library **$235,598**

"Library has been a BIG part of my life. Thank you so much."

- Wendy W. on Facebook

LIBRARY LOVERS VISIT AND CONNECT WITH VBPL ON SOCIAL MEDIA, TOO.

907
POSTS

"Literally just made a candle for free at VB Public Library!! So cool!!"
- Ashley L. on Faceboook

1,467,484
IMPRESSIONS *(POTENTIAL VIEWS)*

5,653
CLICKS ON LINKS TO PROGRAMS, SERVICES & MORE

17,581
VIDEO VIEWS

"I'm so grateful for the opportunities that VBPL provides for everyone!"

- Staci B. on Faceboook

VIRGINIA BEACH LIBRARY FOUNDATION

The Virginia Beach Library Foundation serves as the philanthropic partner of Virginia Beach Public Library, raising private funds that enhance programs, collections and learning opportunities throughout the system. Through donor contributions, community events and grant management, the Foundation helps expand the Library's ability to offer innovative programming and respond to community needs. In FY24, Foundation support helped fund technology programming, environmental education initiatives and the permanent StoryWalk installation at Williams Farm Park, while events such as Mini Golf at Central Library and the Giving Tuesday campaign generated funding that was reinvested into programs benefiting residents of all ages.

Foundation-supported work included:

- Hosting "Novel Affair: Welcome to Wonderland," an **Alice in Wonderland–themed gala** at Oceanfront Area Library. Guests were encouraged to dress in costume and enjoy an evening of dinner, drinks, games, dancing, live music and interactive escape room experiences. The event raised more than $11,000 to support library programs and resources, bringing the community together for a creative celebration of books, imagination and the library.
- **Mini-Golf at Central Library:** More than 160 participants raised $9,000 for programs.
- Over **$2,000** raised on Giving Tuesday — a new record.
- Funding energy-efficiency initiatives, technology for programming and permanent StoryWalk.
- Management of grants totaling more than **$16,000** for whale education programs, environmental conservation and community energy savings.
- Adult Programming Support , **$550**
- Summer Reading Challenge, **$1,729**
- Youth Programming Support, **$4,112**
- Technology Programming Support, **$12,468**
- Embedded Libraries, **$100**
- Library of Things Expansion, **$7,300**
- Northern Region Programming, **$10,450**
- Southern Region Programming, **$5,100**
- Volunteer Recognition, **$939**

VIRGINIA BEACH
LIBRARY FOUNDATION

FRIENDS OF THE VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Friends of the Virginia Beach Public Library supports library programs and services by raising funds through the sale of donated and gently used books. Proceeds from these sales are returned to the library in the form of grants that help fund programs and initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge, youth and adult programming, technology activities and other community events. These volunteer-led efforts ensure that book donations directly support learning opportunities for readers of all ages.



Highlights include:

- A new, low-cost credit payment option for Book Nook purchases, implemented at local branches.
- Two $1,000 scholarships were awarded to MLIS students **Alisya Edwards** and **Jessica West** at the annual meeting.

FRIENDS
Virginia Beach Public Library

WE ♥ OUR VOLUNTEERS



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers continued to support VBPL through youth and adult placements across the system.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Recognition of Joint-Use Library volunteers and staff members **Dana Porter and Helen Van** at the City's Office of Volunteer Resources ceremony.
- Teen volunteer Jordan Yeager receiving the **Debra Elam Volunteer Award**.

12,665
HOURS

364
VOLUNTEERS

$402,767
IN COST SAVINGS

GROWING LEADERS

Staff development remained a priority as VBPL invested in continuous learning and organizational excellence.

All Staff Training Day brought employees together on May 2, 2024, for systemwide learning and collaboration.

The year also marked the launch of Building Together, a workplace culture initiative focused on strengthening teams, developing leaders and fostering an inclusive environment. This work reinforces organizational values and expanding leadership opportunities for staff at all levels.

Ongoing training opportunities covered new technology kits, programming tools, accessibility practices and community engagement strategies.

Staff achievements were celebrated through internal recognition programs, including PIE (Passion, Innovation and Excellence) Awards.

Scholarships awarded by the Friends supported professional growth and continuing education for library staff.



















CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH
Public
Library