Municipal Library Board

Annual Report

FY2025

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DALLAS, TEXAS

City of Dallas

DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Approved by the current members
of the Municipal Library Board on January 13, 2026

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Chair's Memo

DATE: January 30, 2026
TO: The Honorable Eric Johnson, Mayor of Dallas
Members of the Dallas City Council
FROM: Municipal Library Board MLB Members

Mayor and Council Members,

Thank you for entrusting your Municipal Library Board (MLB) appointees with one of the City's most vital assets. Every day, we hear how the Dallas Public Library (DPL) improves the quality of life for Dallas residents, often in life-changing ways. We are encouraged to see the continued growth and utilization of its programs, services, and outreach. Our Dallas library branches are essential community gathering spaces where residents can access resources free of charge. Residents also increasingly make use of free digital resources online. In fact, the City of Dallas 2025 Community Survey found that the library was among the City services that residents rated highest, with 91% of respondents rating DPL services as "excellent" or "good."

In our advisory capacity, we have diligently worked to keep you up to date on library use statistics and programs and hope you find those reports helpful. We also want to highlight some impressive cumulative numbers for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025:

- Dallas Public Library branches saw **1,937,672 individuals walk into our facilities** over the last fiscal year. Whether looking for materials, attending programs, or simply seeking a welcoming public place, the central and branch locations continue to serve as open spaces that welcome everyone.
- **41,848 new library cards were issued** and more than **55% of Dallas residents are library card holders**. Considering that many households share a single card (as children often use their parents' cards), the percentage of total users in our city is even higher.
- The Dallas Public Library offered patrons **15,520 programs** with a total **program attendance of 254,771 individuals** across all branch locations.
- There were **8,835,592 total checkouts of materials**, including physical books and magazines, audio books, e-books, vinyl records, and more.
- The library serves as an essential source of **early childhood education** in our community, offering free opportunities such as the SMART Summer reading and discovery program, "Reading Ready Play Spaces" for children ages 0-5 to learn through play at every branch, story time, and other exploratory programming.
- Through **adult learning** programs, 8,692 individuals pursued their GED high school equivalency, 10,627 learned English, and 650 worked toward their U.S. citizenship.

Board members spent significant time at our branch libraries, interacting with patrons, meeting with staff, and engaging with Friends groups. We were pleased to share with you, our Council Members, and with the library leadership the many positive comments and feedback we heard.

We were also pleased to welcome Manya Shorr as the new Library Director. She took on the role in the middle of budget season and worked closely with MLB members in understanding challenges and opportunities for the system. We appreciate her fresh perspectives and insights as a seasoned leader in library administration and believe she can guide the system forward in an innovative way.

Throughout the year, we worked to make the most of our roles as visible representatives of the library in the community. Although the MLB has no policy-setting authority, appointees shaped and influenced the library system as representatives of all Dallas residents.

Among the highlights:

- We celebrated the first steps forward in the $43.5 million in library bond projects: a renovation of the Preston Royal Branch, replacement buildings for both the North Oak Cliff and Park Forest Branches, and ADA improvements to restrooms at nine locations.
- Dallas Public Library operating hours were maintained at six days a week, and additional evening and weekend hours began January 30. Six branches and the Central Library are now open for seven hours on Sundays – an increase in access for working families and their children.
- We reluctantly saw the need to close the Skillman Southwestern Branch Library as part of a cost-saving measure for the system. This closure was delayed for a year, and funds to continue its operation did not materialize.

There are significant challenges ahead. We know that discretionary funding is at a premium, and cost savings will reshape our approach to how library services are delivered. Yet we remain optimistic that this next chapter will be transformational, reshaping the system to better position it to meet the evolving needs and expectations of all patrons.

The Board is, as always, grateful for the ongoing support from our city's leadership, especially the City Council members who have prioritized library funding and growth and who champion the library system throughout the year. Because of you, the Dallas Public Library achieves its vision of limitless possibilities for Dallas residents by championing their right to discover, learn, and grow through the power of free information and free reading.

Sincerely,

Katherine Leal Unmuth
Chair, Municipal Library Board

cc: Kimberly Bizor Tolbert, City Manager
M. Elizabeth Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager, Quality of Life, Arts & Culture
Manya Shorr, Director of Libraries

Municipal Library Board Members

October 1, 2024—September 30, 2025

District	Board Member	Confirmed	Council Member
1	**Amy Schaffner**	09/15/2021	Chad West
2	**Katherine Leal Unmuth**	01/24/2024	Jesse Moreno
3	**Mystica Jacob**	02/12/2025	Zarin D. Gracey
4	**Stan Aten**	06/15/2023	Carolyn King Arnold Maxie Johnson★
5	**Alicia McClung** ***Miriam Hernandez*** ✓	4/17/2024 *01/14/2026*	Jaime Resendez
6	***Vacant*** **Devron Armstrong***	Thru 8/25 08/27/25	Omar Narvaez Laura Cadena★
7	**Heather Hornor** **Robyn Kirk ***	09/27/2023 08/06/2025	Adam Bazaldua
8	**Sam Staggs** ***Debbie Austin*** ✓	06/01/2022 *01/14/2026*	Tennell Atkins Lorie Blair ★
9	**Patrick O'Brien**	11/03/21	Paula C. Blackmon
10	**Jeri Baker** **Patti Clapp***	02/07/2024 10/22/2025	Kathy Stewart
11	**Raphael McIntyre** ***Carol Pinker*** ✓	10/18/2023 *10/31/2025*	Jaynie Schultz Bill Roth ★
12	**Daniel Tatum**	11/08/2023	Cara Mendelsohn
13	**Anne Harding**	09/01/2021	Gay Donnell Willis
14	**Donna Denison**	09/27/2021	Paul Ridley
At Large	**Sandra Zucker***	10/01/2025	Mayor Eric Johnson

* new appointee post-election

★ new to City Council

✓ added in current 2025-26 fiscal year

Municipal Library Board
Statement of Purpose

In accordance with Dallas City Code, the Municipal Library Board is charged with advising the Mayor and City Council, the City Manager, and the Director of Libraries on matters related to library operations and services. The Board also assumes a supportive role through its promotion of the library and its programs.

Dallas Public Library

Mission Statement

The Dallas Public Library strengthens communities by connecting people, inspiring curiosity, and advancing lives.

Vision Statement

Limitless possibilities start at the Dallas Public Library.

FY 2024 Objectives and Accomplishments

Maintained our core role as a liaison between the library system and members of the Dallas City Council:

- Maintained communication with Council Members to relay information regarding community advocacy and to actively support and promote Library accomplishments and programming.
    - Shared monthly reports and updates with Council Members as provided by library staff.
    - Sent regular email updates to Council Members on DPL topics relevant to their district.
- Worked to protect and enhance the library's budget to its fullest extent per American Library Association and Texas Library Association best practices benchmarks.

Explored and strengthened partnerships that benefit the library:

- Worked more closely with the Friends of the Dallas Public Library (FoDPL) and their efforts to support programs and goals established by Dallas Public Library, especially as FoDPL transitioned its staff leadership.
- Engaged with branch Friends groups and encouraged their participation in the Friends Alliance, a cooperative effort to share ideas and resources.

Supported the library at the branch level:

- Remained engaged with district branches and staff, participating in branch-specific activities and visiting at least once per quarter.
- Communicated with branch managers to gather news and identify specific needs, coordinating with Library Director if necessary.
- Interfaced with patrons and the community to get feedback and promote library services and events, whether through social media, word of mouth, or other opportunities.

Focused on continuity of services and library stability:

- Continued to promote Library services, resources, and community-based programs that meet the needs of Dallas residents through the lens of equity including: Storytimes and Play Spaces; Adult Learning (GED, English Language Learning, job seekers resources, etc.); Music Lessons, Creative Spaces and more.
- Supported the implementation of the new Strategic & Facilities Plan.
- Supported the transition to a new Director of Libraries.
- Continued to leverage technology to enhance Library services and operations, specifically as it relates to the request for expansion of digital access through the E-Rate program.
- Supported the development and launch of a new website.

Fulfilled Board expectations:

- Attended Board Meetings and participated in ad-hoc committees as needed.
- Continuously added to our knowledge of Library policies, programs, and procedures.

FY 2025 Proposed Goals and Objectives

Strengthen our core role as a liaison between the DPL and Dallas City Council:

- Maintain communication with Council Members to relay information regarding community advocacy and to actively support and promote Library programming and accomplishments:
    - Share monthly reports and updates to Council Members as provided by library staff.
    - Send personal email updates to Council Members on their district's libraries.
    - Meet one on one with Council members and staff as feasible to reinforce the critical role of the DPL as a City service.
- Commit to protecting and enhancing the library's budget to its fullest extent per American Library Association and Texas Library Association best practices benchmarks.

Support the Dallas Library Strategic Plan's Year Two Objectives

- Encourage public understanding of significant operational changes needed to address the $2.6 million budget reduction in the upcoming fiscal year and future funding challenges. These changes may include implementing a regional model, library closures, a systemwide reduction in days and hours that branches are open, or other adjustments to how library services are delivered.
- Work with the Library Director and key DPL staff to reimagine the Central Library, including exploring small-scale capital renovation and implementation, co-location opportunities, and deferred maintenance cost assessments.
- Help shape priority programming, with a particular focus on youth services. Consider the best way forward for Central Library offerings.
- Advise the library staff in right-sizing the library collection for the needs of the community, including a data-driven spending model that balances physical vs. e-materials and reduces shelf space (consolidates books to fewer shelves; removes excess shelving) while maintaining access to the full circulating collection.
- Monitor the continued need for safety measures across all locations, including the revision of the incident reporting system.

Explore and strengthen partnerships that benefit the library:

- Explore partnerships with other Boards, Commissions, city departments, and other agencies and organizations that can enhance the mission and/or vision of MLB and DPL.
    - For example, the library currently works closely with Big Thought and Dallas County Master Gardeners, among others.
    - The City of Dallas Park and Recreation Department has many cooperative programs with branch libraries. There may be opportunities for other City departments to do the same.
    - Consider partnerships specifically focused on early childhood literacy.
- Work more closely with the Friends of the Dallas Public Library (FoDPL) and their efforts to provide significant funding for programs across the DPL system and advocate on its behalf.
    - Actively include the FoDPL executive director and Board President in MLB meetings.

Support the library at the branch level:

- Stay engaged with district branches and staff, participating in branch-specific activities and visiting at least once per quarter. Communicate with branch managers to gather news and identify specific needs, coordinating with Library Director if necessary.
- Interface with the community to gather feedback and promote library services and events. This includes but is not limited to attendance at Budget Town Halls each summer.
- Work with Branch Friends groups, who provide additional financial support for programming (up to $3,000 per branch library per fiscal year).

    - Audelia Road
    - Hampton-Illinois
    - Lakewood
    - Lochwood
    - Oak Lawn
    - North Oak Cliff
    - Park Forest
    - Preston Royal
    - Renner Frankford
    - White Rock Hills

    In progress: Vickery Park, Fretz Park

Fulfill Board expectations:

- Attend all Board Meetings and participate in ad-hoc committees as needed.
- Continuously add to our knowledge of Library policies, programs, and procedures.