

**REPORT OF THE BOARD’S DELEGATE TO THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD**

*June 29, 2023*

*Submitted by Director Siemsen*

**MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACTIVITIES OF APRIL 2023 REGULAR MEETING**

---

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Mark Sain, Chris Layden, Teresa Mercado, Michele Bria, Matthew Kowalski,  
Michael Morgan, Felicia Saffold, Erika Siemsen, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Ald. Milele Coggs, Ald. Scott Spiker

STAFF: Neil Albrecht, Chantel Clark, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Joseph Moretz, Karli Pederson,  
Marian Royal, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:04 p.m. on January 24, 2023 with a quorum present. Trustee Coggs participated by conference phone.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:07 p.m. on April 25, 2023 with a quorum present. Trustee Kowalski and Trustee Vincent participated by conference phone.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes March 28, 2023
2. Committee Reports
  - a. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes – April 4, 2023
  - b. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – April 6, 2023
3. Administrative Reports
  - a. Financial Report
  - b. Library Director’s Reports
  - c. Statistics

President Sain asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as attachment A, pages 3-16 of the agenda. Trustee Layden moved to accept the consent agenda; Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.

## REPORTS

---

4. Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting. Trustee Siemsen and Karli Pederson, Associate Library Director - Library Information Technology and Technical Services, reported on the April 17, 2023 meeting. The MCFLS marketing team is exploring opportunities to reach a diverse audience, including placing radio ads on local stations. In order to increase accessibility to library materials and resources, the 'money owed' block threshold was increased from \$5.01 to \$10.01. The change will be effective for all member libraries on July 1, 2023. The Library Director's Advisory Council (LDAC) discussed best practices and incentives for summer reading programs. The LDAC discussed methods for handling challenges to library materials and members shared current policies and processes. Automatic library card renewal through the Patron Point software was introduced and will be discussed at a future meeting. The LDAC subcommittee workgroup is evaluating MCFLS member library committees to identify efficiencies and ways to support all member libraries. LDAC made a recommendation to the MCFLS Board to replace the current public catalog, Encore, with a new platform called Aspen. The Board approved the recommendation. The change, including implementation cost, will be supported in the 2024 budget. Preliminary catalog testing will begin in Quarter 4 2023 with a goal for full implementation by June 2024. The Board moved into Executive Session to discuss the System Director evaluation. Informational item.
5. Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Executive Board. Trustee Bria presented an update on the work of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Board. Trustee Bria attended the April meeting, held in Nashville, TN. The ULC has developed a Declaration of Democracy, which describes public libraries as cornerstones of democracy and focuses on preserving intellectual freedom. To date, 89 US libraries and 16 international libraries have signed the declaration. The document will be forwarded to the Board for review and possible action at a future meeting. Member libraries, including MPL, were surveyed to help inform ongoing strategic planning. According to the survey results, threats to intellectual freedom and politicization of libraries are considered the foremost challenges that will have the greatest impact on urban library communities in the next 3-5 years. Social service needs were also identified as an area of significant need in public libraries. ULC has engaged a government relations agency to advocate as a united voice for member libraries. Their work will focus on securing federal funding from various agencies in addition to the funding libraries receive through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). ULC can also assist with grant applications. ULC will launch a new CEO roundtable in spring 2024. ULC has produced several white papers which have received national media attention. The Board discussed opportunities for Trustees to advocate on behalf of MPL. Informational item.

## BOARD DEVELOPMENT

---

6. Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library. Zarina Mohd Shah, Library Services Manager, shared information about Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) services. WTBBL is a regional network library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS). Every state in the country has a regional and/or sub-regional talking book program. The program is funded through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and is administered through MPL. WTBBL has been located in Central Library since 1961 and is staffed by 10 full-time employees. Service is provided to over 6,000 patrons and nearly 500 institutions statewide. The free library service is available to all Wisconsin residents with a physical disability, vision impairment, or reading disabilities. WTBBL provides audio books and equipment, audio-described DVDs, and Braille materials. All materials are sent and returned at no charge through the United States Postal Service (USPS). The materials have no due date and there are no overdue fines. Patrons also have access to newspapers, books, and magazines through a Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) app on personal devices or digital talking book player. The Newline

service provides telephone access to 500 national newspapers as well as 15 local newspapers. WTBBL works closely with the non-profit organization Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement (ABLE) to produce recorded and/or Braille materials, including books for the Wisconsin collection, the WTBBL newsletter, Milwaukee Magazine, and the Milwaukee Brewers game schedules. Staff facilitate winter and summer reading programs, a bi-monthly book club that meets by phone, and WTBBL sponsors the annual Braille games held at the Milwaukee Public Museum. WTBBL has an active outreach program that includes onsite visits, exhibition attendance, and online presentations. Library Director Joan Johnson acknowledged Mrs. Mohd Shah's great leadership and WTBBL staff for their excellent work. Informational item.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of April 25, 2023 was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

**Milwaukee Public Library  
Financial Report  
April 30, 2023**

2023

2022

**City Revenues**

	Budget	Received to date	% Received
<i>Additional City Appropriation</i>	\$ 25,081,089	\$ 8,248,427	32.9%
<i>Fines</i>	\$ 128,000	\$ 20,024	15.6%
<i>Lost Materials, etc.</i>	\$ 60,000	\$ 8,893	14.8%
<i>MCFLS Contracts</i>	\$ 802,414	\$ 212,665	26.5%
<b>Total City Appropriation</b>	<b>\$ 26,071,503</b>	<b>\$ 8,490,009</b>	<b>32.6%</b>

	Budget	Received to date	% Received
	\$ 24,482,162	\$ 8,887,692	36.3%
	\$ 138,000	\$ 24,282	17.6%
	\$ 60,000	\$ 21,059	35.1%
	\$ 760,469	\$ 197,985	26.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 25,440,631</b>	<b>\$ 9,131,018</b>	<b>35.9%</b>

**City Expenses**

**Salaries & Benefits**

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
<i>Salaries</i>	\$ 14,013,643	\$ 4,701,052	33.5%
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>	\$ 6,306,139	\$ 2,033,566	32.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 20,319,782</b>	<b>\$ 6,734,618</b>	<b>33.1%</b>

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
	\$ 13,549,077	\$ 4,792,558	35.4%
	\$ 6,232,576	\$ 2,231,100	35.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 19,781,653</b>	<b>\$ 7,023,658</b>	<b>35.5%</b>

**Operating Expenses**

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
<i>General Office Expense</i>	\$ 111,700	\$ 13,522	12.1%
<i>Tools &amp; Machinery Parts</i>	\$ 19,000	\$ 10,427	54.9%
<i>Construction Supplies</i>	\$ 26,000	\$ 5,750	22.1%
<i>Energy</i>	\$ 687,800	\$ 171,714	25.0%
<i>Other Operating Supplies</i>	\$ 248,019	\$ 70,142	28.3%
<i>Vehicle Rental</i>	\$ 9,000	\$ 3,412	37.9%
<i>Non-Vehicle Equipment Rental</i>	\$ 22,000	\$ 11,306	51.4%
<i>Professional Services</i>	\$ 180,751	\$ 89,284	49.4%
<i>Information Technology Services</i>	\$ 417,642	\$ 192,624	46.1%
<i>Property Services</i>	\$ 1,273,520	\$ 454,744	35.7%
<i>Infrastructure Services</i>	\$ 33,000	\$ 63,140	191.3%
<i>Vehicle Repair Services</i>	\$ -	\$ -	100.0%
<i>Other Operating Services</i>	\$ 157,100	\$ 33,699	21.5%
<i>Reimburse Other Departments</i>	\$ 105,000	\$ (2,307)	-2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,290,532</b>	<b>\$ 1,117,457</b>	<b>34.0%</b>

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
	\$ 109,300	\$ 13,810	12.6%
	\$ 20,470	\$ 2,382	11.6%
	\$ 23,000	\$ 8,406	36.5%
	\$ 684,000	\$ 265,879	38.9%
	\$ 193,225	\$ 43,592	22.6%
	\$ 9,000	\$ 1,137	12.6%
	\$ 22,000	\$ 7,243	32.9%
	\$ 215,912	\$ 173,577	80.4%
	\$ 432,972	\$ 260,757	60.2%
	\$ 1,325,660	\$ 598,101	45.1%
	\$ 36,000	\$ 19,396	53.9%
	\$ -	\$ -	100.0%
	\$ 151,548	\$ 30,606	20.2%
	\$ 91,000	\$ (2,434)	-2.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,314,087</b>	<b>\$ 1,422,452</b>	<b>42.9%</b>

**Equipment**

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
<i>Library Materials</i>	\$ 1,757,000	\$ 515,233	29.3%
<i>Computers, etc.</i>	\$ 358,187	\$ 37,078	10.4%
<i>Other</i>	\$ 83,202	\$ 881	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,198,389</b>	<b>\$ 553,192</b>	<b>25.2%</b>

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
	\$ 1,714,000	\$ 580,523	33.9%
	\$ 309,229	\$ 16,341	5.3%
	\$ 63,462	\$ 9,111	14.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,086,691</b>	<b>\$ 605,975</b>	<b>29.0%</b>

**Other Departmental Appropriation**

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
<i>Villard Square Property Payment</i>	\$ 8,300	\$ 500	6.0%
<i>East Property Payment</i>	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	100.0%
<i>Mitchell Street Property Payment</i>	\$ 72,000	\$ 13,500	18.8%
<i>Good Hope Property Payment</i>	\$ 45,000	\$ -	0.0%
<i>Contingent Energy Financing</i>	\$ 133,500	\$ 66,742	50.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 262,800</b>	<b>\$ 84,742</b>	<b>32.2%</b>
<b>Total City Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 26,071,503</b>	<b>\$ 8,490,009</b>	<b>32.6%</b>

	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
	\$ 7,800	\$ -	0.0%
	\$ 3,500	\$ -	0.0%
	\$ 71,000	\$ 13,500	19.0%
	\$ 45,000	\$ -	0.0%
	\$ 130,900	\$ 65,433	50.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 258,200</b>	<b>\$ 78,933</b>	<b>30.6%</b>
<b>Total City Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 25,440,631</b>	<b>\$ 9,131,018</b>	<b>35.9%</b>

**Milwaukee Public Library  
Financial Report  
April 30, 2023**

	2023			2022		
<b>Additional Funding Sources</b>						
<b>Contract Grants</b>						
	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
WTBBL Jul '22 - Jun '23	\$ 1,136,100	\$ 758,995	66.8%	\$ 1,132,000	\$ 767,367	67.8%
ILS Jul '22 - Jun '23	\$ 108,650	\$ 89,431	82.3%	\$ 105,750	\$ 86,666	82.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,244,750</b>	<b>\$ 848,426</b>	<b>68.2%</b>	<b>\$ 1,237,750</b>	<b>\$ 854,033</b>	<b>69.0%</b>
<b>Trust Funds</b>						
	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent	Budget	Spent to date	% Spent
Materials	\$ 124,000	\$ 70,285	56.7%	\$ 113,000	\$ 54,949	48.6%
Programming	\$ 38,000	\$ 8,193	21.6%	\$ 34,000	\$ 4,247	12.5%
Training	\$ 18,000	\$ 6,760	37.6%	\$ 15,000	\$ 1,763	11.8%
Marketing	\$ 32,000	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 29,000	\$ 9,305	32.1%
Contingency	\$ 4,000	\$ 287	7.2%	\$ 4,000	\$ -	0.0%
Board Development	\$ 4,000	\$ 532	13.3%	\$ 4,000	\$ 224	5.6%
Strehlow 50+	\$ 37,319	\$ 331	0.9%	\$ 39,045	\$ -	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 257,319</b>	<b>\$ 86,388</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>\$ 238,045</b>	<b>\$ 70,488</b>	<b>29.6%</b>
<b>Foundation Funds</b>						
	Budget*	Spent to date	% Spent	Budget*	Spent to date	% Spent
Materials	\$ 100,000	\$ 13,150	13.2%	\$ 536,095	\$ 11,720	2.2%
Programming	\$ 2,173,467	\$ 246,488	11.3%	\$ 1,810,580	\$ 171,637	9.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,273,467</b>	<b>\$ 259,638</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>\$ 2,346,675</b>	<b>\$ 183,357</b>	<b>7.8%</b>

\*Foundation budget includes annual amount committed by the MPL Foundation plus prior year carryover.

**Investments**

U.S. Bank National Assoc. Commercial Paper (rated A1+) confirmation #327152096 dated 3/1/23 and maturing 11/1/23 at a rate of 0.4%...\$250,000.00

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**APRIL 2023 ACTIVITIES**

Community Conversations led by Director Johnson continued at Center Street and Villard Square branches, Safe and Sound, and Journey House bringing the total to 12 sessions. The raw data from these sessions is now being processed by the INPOWER Solutions team for analysis.

Director Johnson and the Admin team spent time preparing for and participating in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Martin Luther King, Jr. branch. In partnership with the development team, we executed a high quality, successful event that attracted a large crowd and all of the local media outlets. Johnson was featured in a live shot with Emem Group V.P. Deshea Agee on WTMJ4 evening news as part of the event.

Johnson was notified of MPL and MPL team members being selected for awards by multiple entities, including:

- [2023 Julie Klauber Award](#) from KLAS (Keystone Systems) which recognizes the invaluable support that volunteers and staff provide to their organizations and their patrons. Kimberly Tomlinson, Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library, nominated by Library Services Manager Zarina Mohd Shah, is one of two finalists for the award. The selected recipient of this year's

award will be honored during a ceremony held on Monday, July 17 in Nashville, TN as part of the [2023 KLAS Users' Conference](#).

- VISIT Milwaukee's 2023 Dear MKE award which recognizes a local person, business or team that has captured local fans' affection and succeeded in attracting attention to Milwaukee from national media. MPL's TikTok content producers Fawn Siemsen-Fuchs, Evan Szymkowski and Derek Reilly, were selected for this year's award. They inspired this quote from VISIT Milwaukee, "Through these clever videos, the Milwaukee Public Library has made great strides in informing residents of the resources available through the library system, but also you have positively influenced visitation to the Greater Milwaukee area. Growing an incredible following, the library's unique approach to social media has captivated local and national media attention, including the Today Show earlier this year. For your team's ability to share a delightful new dimension to our city, and for the viewers that you've motivated to visit our city, we are proud to recognize you with this award." VISIT Milwaukee staff will present the award at their Annual Meeting and Party with the Partners event on June 14 at the American Family Insurance Amphitheater on the Henry Maier Festival Park grounds from 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- MPL was selected by COA's (Children's Outing Association) for its HIPPY Milwaukee 2023 Cornerstone Partner Award. COA's HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), an internationally recognized bilingual literacy and school-readiness program, empowers parents as their child's first teacher. HIPPY's mission is to help parents prepare their children for success in school and beyond. The model supports parents as their children's first teacher by providing them the tools, skills, and confidence to teach their young children in the home. The award is presented to "Hippy Heroes" whose missions align with COA's literacy programming. The award will be presented to MPL at COA's annual "HIPPY 25th Anniversary Breakfast." The MPL's Education and Outreach staff who made this recognition possible are Kevin Atkinson, Katie Kison, Melanie Melville, Kou Vang, Maria Villa Rivera, and Kat Wodtke.

Johnson attended three all-day mandatory trainings for EOC Operations and Planning for All-Hazards, and Executive Leadership.

## APRIL 2023 SUMMARY OF VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

---

### MPL HELPS PEOPLE READ

Climate Action Book Club. April's meeting discussed Particulate Matter by Felicia Luna Lemus, in honor of National Poetry Month. This book was richly crafted to explore a variety of themes, including climate migration and land stewardship, all of which the group has discussed previously. Kelly Bolter was also interviewed by Mallory Cheng for WUWM in early April to promote this program, along with the lineup of other Poetry Month offerings from MPL. Attendance: 7

### MPL HELPS PEOPLE LEARN

Rent for Success. Rent for Success is a free tenant training program designed to educate and empower renters to make safe, healthy choices in their housing, and to provide helpful resources. Milwaukee has experienced high rates of eviction over the past decade. In this workshop, participants learn how to: understand rental agreements, advocate for themselves legally, repair their credit, get a free credit report, respond to housing violations effectively, find healthy food, end a bad tenancy, and select the right place to rent. Participants receive a certificate of completion and a 50-page resource manual. Attendance: 3

Krug Lecture Series. On Saturday, April 29th, MPL welcomed the return of the Krug Lecture Series at Central Library. An excellent presentation from Dr. Hilary Snow of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Honors College featured prints and books from the Edo period of Japanese history. All featured materials are part of the Krug Rare Books collection. Attendance: 38

Growing a Bountiful Harvest, Even When Time, Space, and Budget are Limited. Gardening and horticulture expert Melinda Myers has been working with MPL to develop a spring virtual webinar series. Attendees at this session learned tips and strategies to help harvest the most produce out of small garden spaces. Whether they have a dedicated garden or squeeze fruits, vegetables, and herbs in the home landscape wherever space allows, Melinda shared helpful information to grow lots of produce no matter the limitations. Attendance: 351

## **MPL HELPS PEOPLE CONNECT**

Mario the Poet and Friends Branch Poetry Tour. MPL's esteemed Poet Laureate, Mario the Poet, visited five Branch locations during the month of April to celebrate Poetry Month. Each session featured spoken word performance by Mario, and other poets in attendance. Ryeshia Farmer facilitated an open mic portion of each event. Total attendance at five sessions: 51

Milwaukee Zine Fest. MPL partnered with The Bindery for the third year to host an annual gathering of artists, makers, and Zine creators in the largest such festival in the Midwest. Milwaukee Zine Fest presented its fifteenth event, which was the largest iteration of this event thus far. This was the second in person Fest event at MPL since 2019, and featured an expanded footprint of over 100 vendors tabling in the Rotunda, first floor, and second floor of Central Library. The event also featured two workshops, including one lead by MPL's Maria Burke, Manager of Mitchell Street Branch Library. Attendance (approx.): 1,753

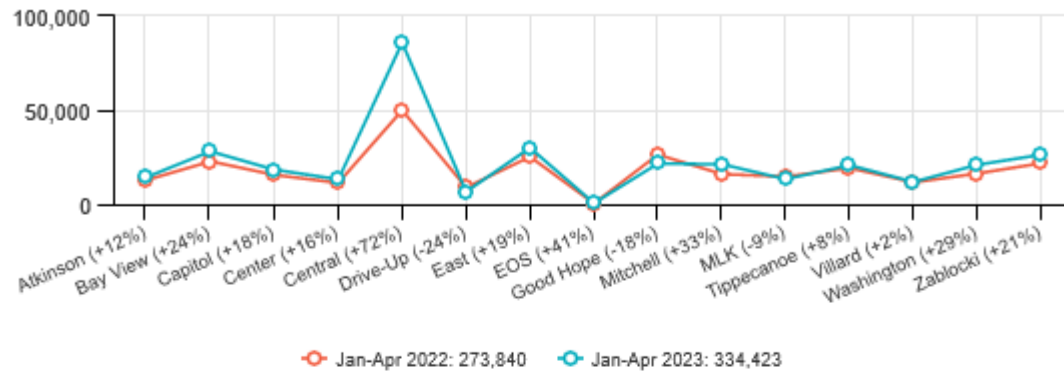
Blissful Spring Brunch. Cargill Kitchen Coordinator Sharrie Agee presented MPL's third community meal as a brunch event. Attendees played MPL trivia and spring-themed bingo, and enjoyed a delicious meal with a variety of food options. Alderman Perez was in attendance as well. Attendance: 54

Yoga for Beginners. This month, the Bay View Branch began offering a free beginner yoga class. So far, the program seems to be well received by the neighborhood. After the first class, several patrons shared how excited they were that this program exists at the library. Praise was extended to our yoga instructor, Tom Koller, who has been a fantastic teacher and great to work with. Patrons also showed interest in meditation programs, which works out well since Bay View is hoping to host Meditate Milwaukee monthly during the summer. Overall, wellness programs seem to be a hit at Bay View! Total attendance for April sessions: 17

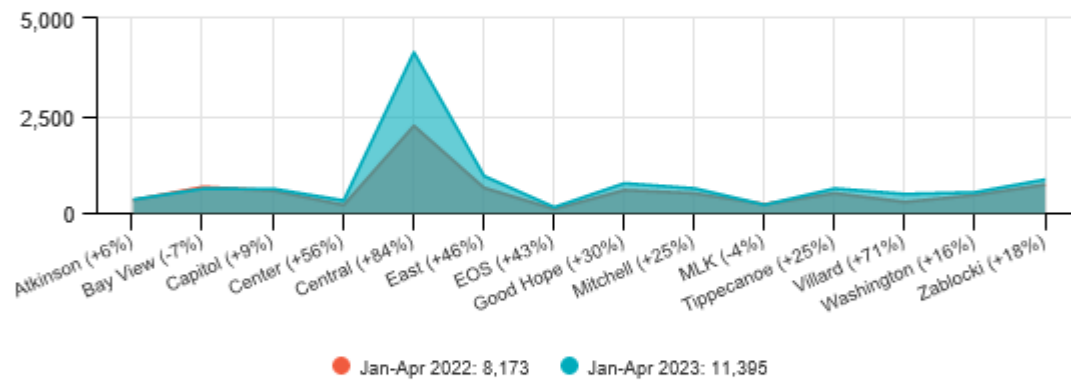
Knot Just Knitting (series). This ongoing program is hosted at Good Hope Library and attracts between five and ten people, many who come to get help from Ruth Shank, a local fiber artist and community volunteer. People bring knitting, crochet, sewing and one of our regular attendees makes 15th century bobbin lace. The group has been asking us to offer the program more frequently, and beginning this past month, we are now offering it on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Total attendance for two sessions: 16

Total attendance for 78 programs: 2,701 (approx.)

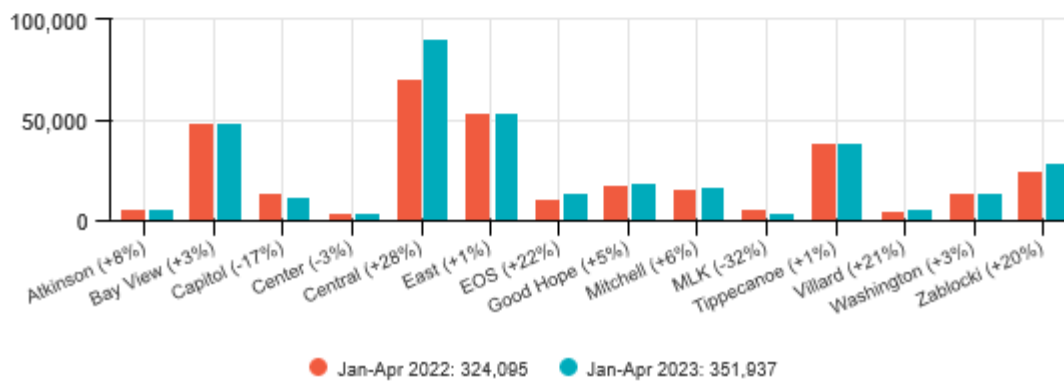
## Patron Visits



## Registration



## Traditional Circulation

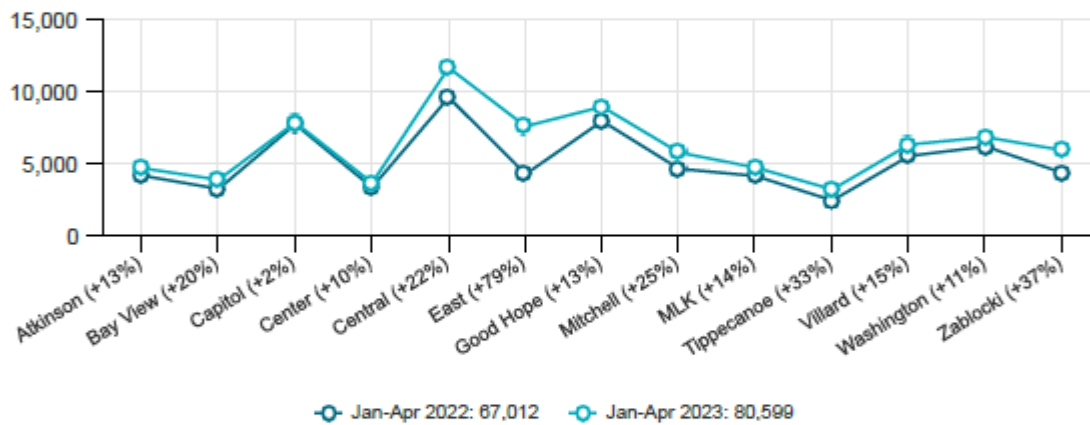




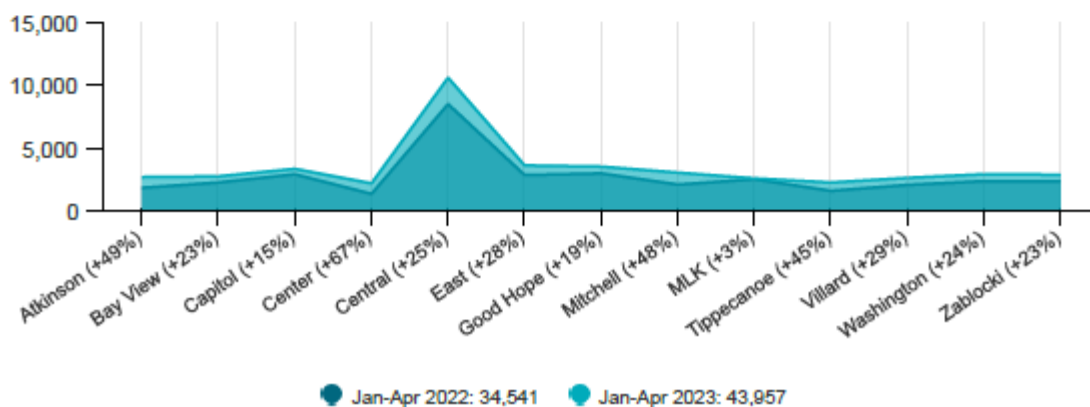
## eCirculation

Platform	Jan-Apr 2022	Jan-Apr 2023	Change
Freegal Music	29,153	60,732	108%
hoopla Digital	15,402	19,972	30%
Kanopy	3,108	5,115	65%
OverDrive	110,484	127,075	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>158,145</b>	<b>212,894</b>	<b>35%</b>

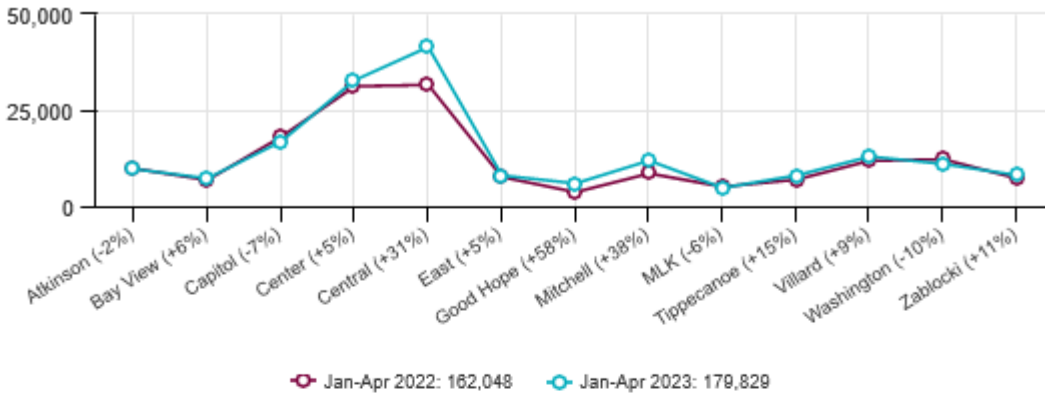
## Print/Copy/Fax/Scan Jobs



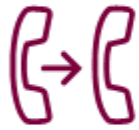
## Public Computer Sessions



## Wi-Fi Sessions



## Ready Reference



**15,676**  
Call Sessions  
Last Year: 21,987

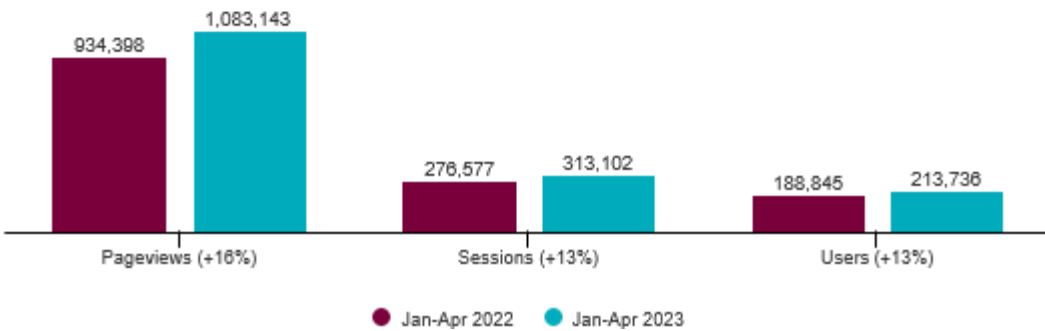


**840**  
Chat Sessions  
Last Year: 774

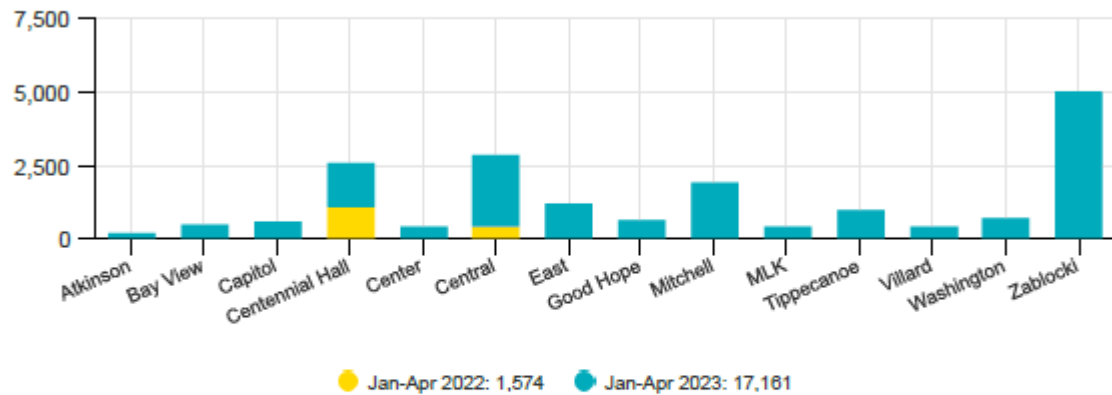


**576**  
Email Sessions  
Last Year: 612

## Webpage Usage



## Meeting Space Users



## Program Attendance

