

# HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

## A Vibrant Year of Renewal

Dear Readers,

Warm greetings to each of you! Celebrating over 130 years of service, Hoboken Public Library stands as a beacon of growth, adapting to the evolving needs of our vibrant urban community while upholding a steadfast commitment to education and public service. In the spirit of our rich tradition, I am thrilled to share the highlights of an extraordinary year through the lens of our annual report.

2023 marked the completion of the historic restoration of the 3rd floor, including a dedicated Makerspace Room that continues an institutional practice of providing hands-on opportunities in craftsmanship and design. This year we also launched a comprehensive rebranding that brought a vibrant refresh to signage outside and inside our buildings and brand new library cards.

Throughout 2023, the library spearheaded creative approaches to better serve our communities, reduce equity gaps, and help patrons access the services they need. Our social work and engagement teams worked seamlessly together, partnering with over 50 local organizations, businesses, schools, and social service providers. These invaluable relationships have provided a direct pathway to reach underserved communities within and beyond our four walls.

In August, the Library Board of Trustees re-affirmed our commitment to intellectual freedom by declaring our library a book sanctuary, and City Council subsequently declared Hoboken the first Book Sanctuary City in New Jersey, “where no book shall be banned, endangered books shall be protected, and all types of books shall be made accessible to all without regard to their content”. In a time when diversity of expression is under attack, we are reminded why public libraries are our most democratic institutions, defenders of free thought, and central to robust civic engagement.

As you’ll see in the following pages, we are proud to work together on ground-breaking efforts that make a real difference in the lives of our community. Just as our founder Martha Bayard Stevens’ philanthropic legacies can still be found across Hoboken, the library strives to make a lasting, meaningful impact that reaches all corners of our mile square city. I am honored to be part of this legacy and look forward to more bright things to come in 2024.

With gratitude,  
*Jennie Pu, Library Director*



## Library Board

Jerome Abernathy  
**President**

Kurt Thoens  
**Treasurer**

Susan Murcko  
**Secretary**

Amanda R. Blaney  
Damian DeBenedetto  
Raakhee Mirchandani  
Jack Silbert

Jason Freeman  
**Mayor's Representative**

Malani Cademartori  
**Board Superintendent Alternate**

Mayor Ravi Bhalla  
**Ex-Officio**

Dr. Christine Johnson  
**Superintendent of School**

Jennie Pu  
**Library Director**

Clark Matthews; Karla Aybar Reyes  
**Recording Secretary**

## Support Organizations

Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation

## Library Staff

48 Members  
42 full-time  
6 part-time





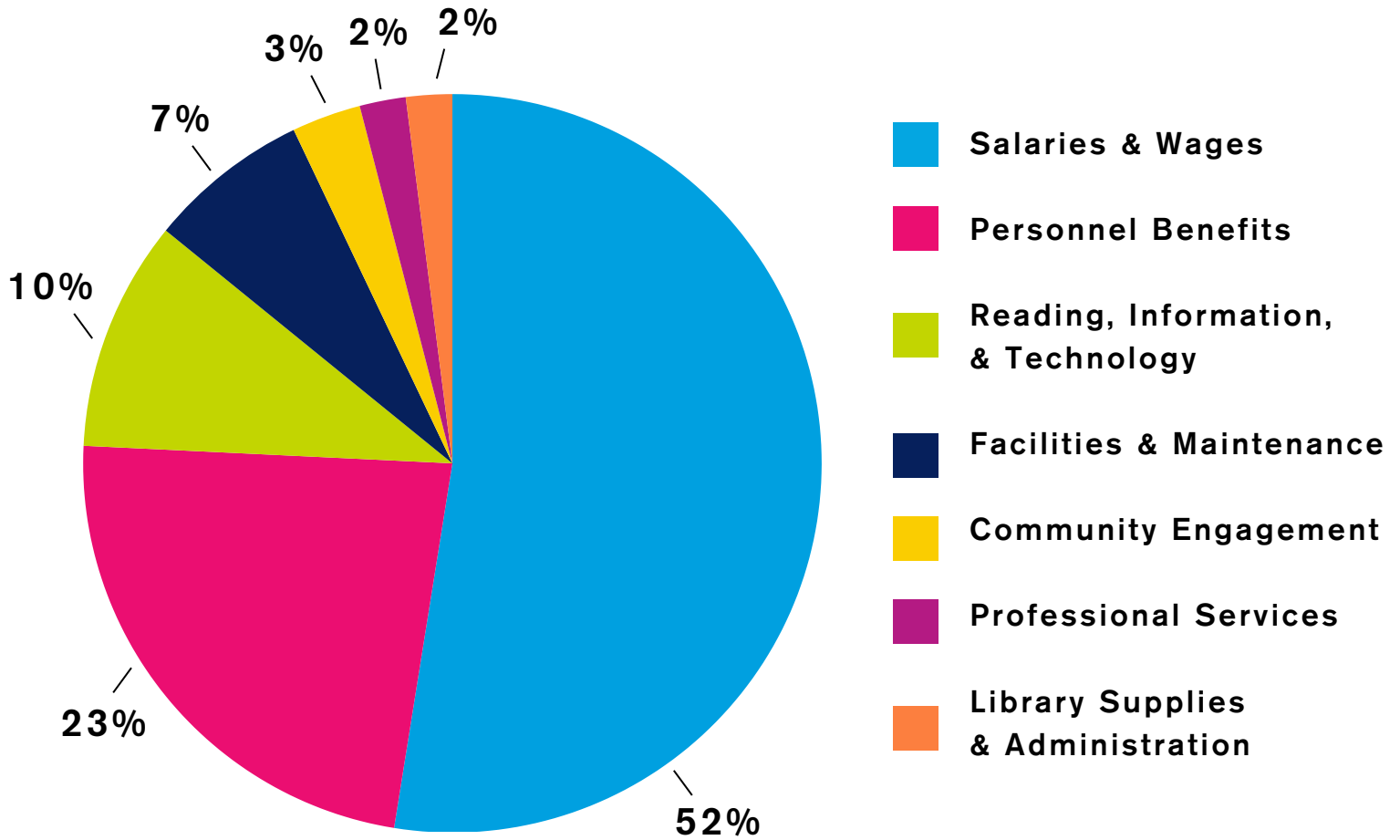
# MISSION

The Hoboken Public Library connects people with each other, ideas, and opportunities to support lifelong learning, personal growth, and community development.





# 2023 Operating Budget




<b>Salaries &amp; Wages</b>	<b>\$3,188,000</b>
<b>Personnel Benefits</b>	<b>\$1,380,000</b>
<b>Reading, Information, &amp; Technology</b>	<b>\$628,000</b>
<b>Facilities &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>\$450,867</b>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>
<b>Professional Services</b>	<b>\$128,000</b>
<b>Library Supplies &amp; Administration</b>	<b>\$136,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,070,867</b>


# 2023 BY THE NUMBERS: ON THE UP & UP!



**52%**  
more outreach  
visits

**61%**  
more people  
through our doors

**49%** more items  
circulated

**32%**  
more digital circulation

**40%**  
more program  
attendance



**118%**  
more attendance at  
outreach events

**336%**  
more library cards  
registered!




**2,428**  
Community Care  
Kits distributed

**202%**  
more museum  
passes used

**121%**  
more computer use

**88%**  
more tech lending





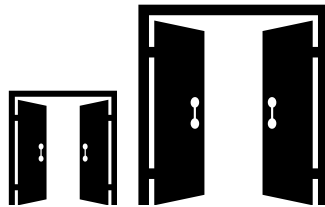
# 2023 BY THE NUMBERS: ON THE UP & UP!

## CIRCULATION



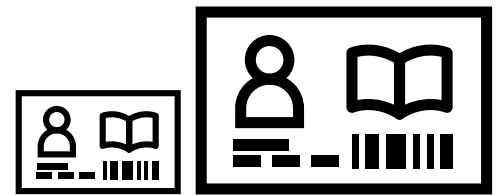
2022: 111,308  
2023: 165,724

## VISITORS



2022: 106,361  
2023: 171,642

## NEW LIBRARY CARDS REGISTERED



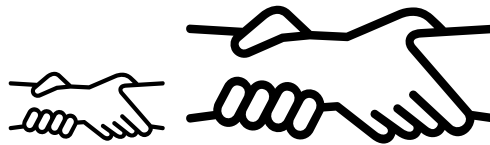
2022: 1,175  
2023: 5,127

## DIGITAL CIRCULATION



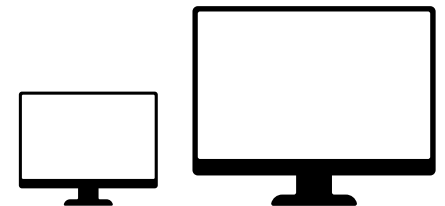
2022: 111,308  
2023: 165,724

## OUTREACH ATTENDANCE



2022: 4,783  
2023: 10,416

## PUBLIC COMPUTER USE



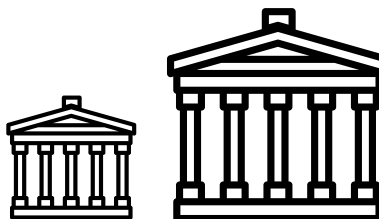
2022: 6,295  
2023: 13,895

## PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



2022: 38,905  
2023: 54,643

## MUSEUM PASS USE



2022: 174  
2023: 526

## TECH LENDING USE



2022: 2,894  
2023: 5,436



# OUR NEW LOOK



**HOBOKEN FREE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



# HIGHLIGHTS

## JANUARY

- The library was featured in a TAPintoHOBOKEN article titled “A Look into the Future: What’s to Come for Hoboken’s Public Library.”
- The Friends of the Library and Library Foundation held a successful merger event to announce the formation of the **Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation**.



## FEBRUARY

- Youth Services completed its first round of popup library visits at the Hoboken elementary schools. They opened over **150 library cards** and circulated **980 items**.
- In furtherance of our strategic plan, we created a public version of our approved budget available on our website.



## MARCH

- Library Social Worker Emily Dalton was invited to read her article on social work at the library at the Hoboken City Council meeting. The City Council surprised Emily with a proclamation recognizing her social work services.
- The Hoboken Historic Preservation Commission approved our **new monument sign** and **awning**.





# HIGHLIGHTS

## APRIL

- We held a **Social Work Panel Discussion** moderated by Hoboken City Council President Emily Jabbour and featuring Jennie Pu, Emily Dalton, Director of Public Safety, Ken Ferrante, Head of Constituent Services, Nora DeBenedetto, and city Social Workers Lori Hetzel and Bianca Hoffer.
- Library **postcards** welcoming new Hoboken residents were mailed to 655 newcomers.



## MAY

- After years of extensive renovations, the highly anticipated soft opening of the **3rd floor** of our library took place on May 11.
- State Librarian Jennifer Nelson visited the library to speak to members of the board, Friends & Foundation, and library staff about advocacy in libraries.
- We celebrated **National Library Week** with a full week of exciting programs across all departments.



## JUNE

- In partnership with the City, we held a successful **Banned Books Read-a-Thon** for Pride Month. Readers included Mayor Bhalla, Congressman Menendez, City Council members, library trustees, HPL Friends & Foundation, Mile Square Theatre and many other community partners.
- Community Engagement staff member and library school student Natalie Castillo won both an **NJLA and BCCLS scholarship**.





# HIGHLIGHTS

## JULY

- Youth Services saw an increase in registration in our **Summer Reading program**, in part because of our partnership with the schools.
- Youth Services hosted the **Community Lifestyles summer camp** for the second year in a row.
- We received a **grant** from the NJ Department of Labor for \$50,000 to help workers across the state become aware of their rights.



## AUGUST

- The HPL Board of Trustees passed a resolution declaring the Hoboken Public Library as the first **book sanctuary** in New Jersey.
- The library officially **rebranded!**
- We welcomed our new board member, Damian De Benedetto to the Hoboken Public Library Board of Trustees.
- The Friends & Foundation room on the first floor opened to the public.



## SEPTEMBER

- The Hoboken City Council voted unanimously for Hoboken to become the **first book sanctuary city** in New Jersey, serving as a statewide and national model. News coverage included the Jersey Journal, NBC New York, ABC New York, Eyewitness News ABC7NY, WABC-NY, CBS New York, FOX 5 New York, Gothamist, 1010 WINNS, Thirteen PBS, NJ Spotlight, Hoboken Girl, Patch, Tapinto, Hudson County View, Pix 11, and Book Riot.



# HIGHLIGHTS

## OCTOBER

- Our library celebrated a successful **ribbon cutting ceremony** for our \$7 million 3rd floor historic renovation.
- Approximately 1,500 people attended the annual **library festival!**
- Jennie and Ally Blumenfeld attended the “Let Freedom Read” panel discussion at Stevens Institute for Banned Books Week.



## NOVEMBER

- The HPL Friends & Foundation held a successful, sold out “Books & Brew” **fundraiser**.
- A new **book locker** was installed in the arcade by the entrance of the Hoboken Historical Museum. This is our third book locker and first **uptown library location**.



## DECEMBER

- We officially opened our **Makerspace** for programming and community use.
- Our new **vinyl collection** became available to patrons. Our collection includes a wide range of genres, from new and classic Pop to Hoboken-based icons like Frank Sinatra and Yo La Tengo
- Our **special collections** are now available on the Internet Archive, accessible worldwide.





# MOST CHECKED OUT

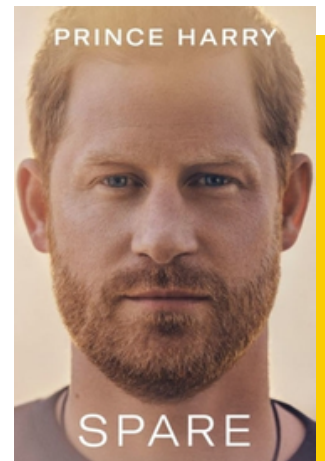
## ADULT FICTION

*The Midnight Library*



## ADULT NONFICTION

*Spare*



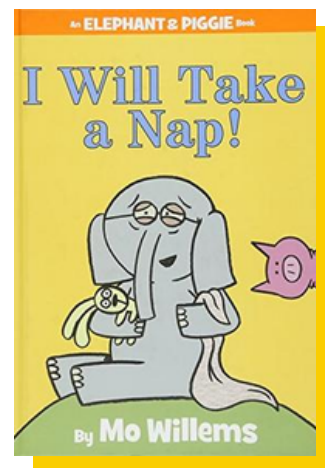
## ADULT MOVIE

*Tár*



## YOUTH BOOK

*I Will Take a Nap*



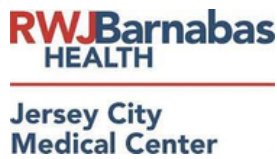
## YOUTH MOVIE

*Sponge on the Run*





# WE LOVE OUR PARTNERS



ST. MATTHEW TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Where tradition and inclusivity meet.



Mental Health Association in New Jersey, Inc.  
Hudson County



Hudson County

