



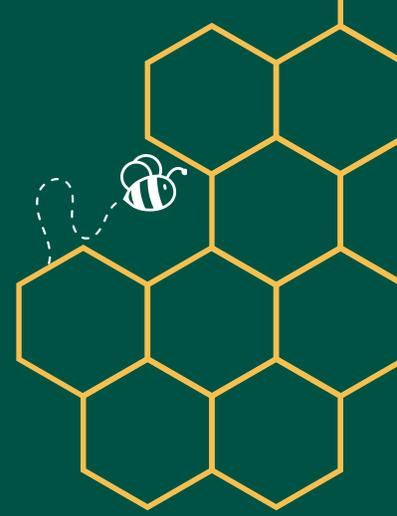
NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

FY24-25

ANNUAL REPORT

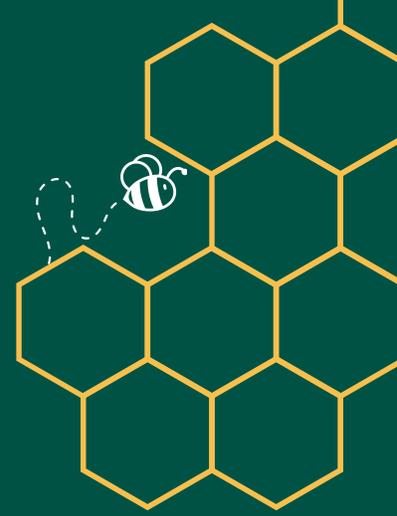


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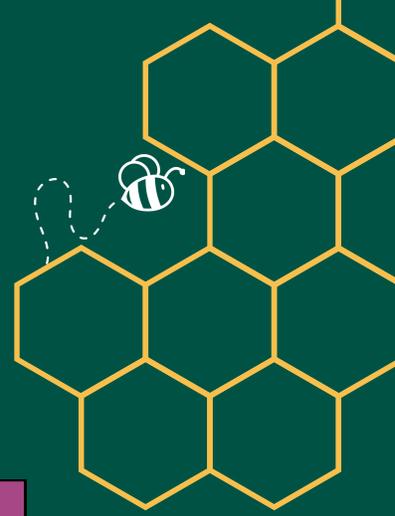
OUR MISSION



*The **New Britain Public Library** aspires to give every resident the opportunity to become successful and well-informed by offering resources, services and experiences that build skills and provide enrichment.*

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2028



GOAL 1: PROVIDE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- a. Increase NBPL usage and the number of card holders.
- b. Provide program offerings geared to community needs (social issues, housing, employment, education, health, technology training).
- c. Meet the community where they are (outreach and promotion of services).

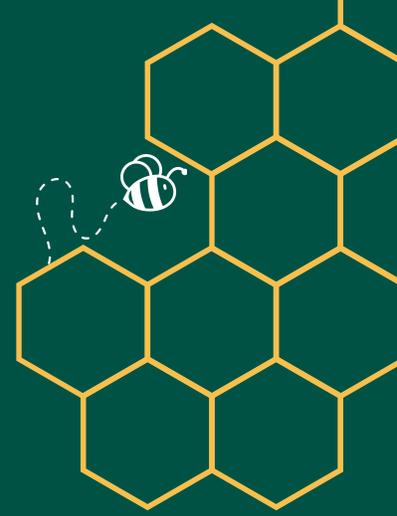
GOAL 2: COMMUNITY

- a. Develop and implement DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) initiatives for the particular needs of our Staff, Board of Trustees and New Britain population.
- b. Work with Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), the Chamber of Commerce, New Britain Public Schools, and Religious, Civic and Community Partners to develop programs connecting all of us.
- c. Improve and expand programming and interaction with New Britain youth in grades 6-12, and young adults ages 18-24.
- d. Recruit and appoint members to the Board of Trustees who reflect the diversity of the community including young people.
- e. Expand the reach of NBPL services including ways to go to the community rather than have them come to us, via bookmobiles, traveling programs, etc.



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2028



GOAL 3: BUILDING: PROVIDE HEALTHY, SAFE SPACE

- a. Work with the New Britain Institute Board of Managers to monitor the NBPL endowment and the use of funds to maintain and improve its buildings.
- b. Continue monitoring and funding building improvements.
- c. Complete fundraising for Phase II of outdoor renovations.
- d. Create a fundraising plan for parking lot entrance renovation.
- e. Explore additional small meeting rooms and a small business center.
- f. Expand space or change location of Local History Room and explore the possibility of re-establishing a New Britain Historical Society.

GOAL 4: OPERATIONS & FUNDRAISING

- a. Review personnel policies and procedures.
- b. Conduct a Staff climate survey annually in order to promote a positive, creative and inclusive culture.
- c. Review backup and recovery supports for all technological systems; adjust as needed.
- d. Expand training opportunities for Trustees in the areas of DEI, fundraising, library services and programming.
- e. Invite staff to make quarterly presentations on programs and/or services to the Board so members can be better stewards of the NBPL.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

NUMBERS IN CONTEXT



Much like the year preceding it, the 24-25 fiscal year was one marked by change and growth. Our library statistics paint a picture of how we serve our community members and how they are utilizing the library, and I will contextualize a few of our datapoints here.

One of the biggest accomplishments of the year was the creation of a brand new website and a marketing rebrand that included a new logo. The old website was not functional and failed to meet the standards of any modern-day website. In fact, our website consultant reported that our project was the most impactful makeover that they've been a part of since the founding of their company in 2012. Likely as a result of this, we saw the traffic to our website go up by 13% compared to the previous year.

We increased our spending on electronic materials, such as eBooks, and we saw an overall increase of 31% in circulation of eMaterials. It was especially encouraging to see the use of children's eBook go up by 43% and that the young adult eBook use went up by 74%. These are hopefully good indicators for future library use for both groups. In contrast to this, we are seeing a 5% decrease in the circulation of physical materials. Monitoring this data has helped inform the decision to continue allocating additional funds to electronic materials, and to make reductions to the physical materials budget in fiscal year 25-26.

The total number of library visits has gone up by 5%, which is steadily building on the 24% increase we saw at the Main Library in 23-24. It is encouraging to see that the visitor numbers are going up at the Jefferson Branch. With a new Branch Manager at the helm and increased programming initiatives being implemented, we are hopeful that this trend will continue. Considering our continuous work to make our spaces more welcoming, usable, and safe (detailed in Business Manager Jazz Cookley's portion of this report), we anticipate that use of our facilities will continue to grow.

We saw a modest 2% increase in the total number of library card holders. Approximately 16% of New Britain residents are now cardholders (still below the Connecticut state average), a number that we hope to grow in 25-26, for example through the use of our library van.

Programming continues to be an important focus, and the community has responded very well to our expansion of offerings across all age groups. Overall, the program attendance is up 15%, and taking a closer look at specific age groups, the increases are even more impressive.

The attendance at programs for children ages 6-11 went up by 106%, largely due to expanding our offerings to this audience. Finally, adults are attending library programs like never before, and I want to especially recognize Librarian Rachel Szostek's work in creating relevant and engaging programs. As a result of this work, our adult program attendance went up by 49%.

Many thanks to our dedicated staff members for their work throughout the year! Thank you for serving the New Britain community every day.

Best,
Viktor Sjöberg

A YEAR IN REVIEW

DEPARTMENT HEAD REFLECTIONS

Our monthly Board reports do a good job of sharing how our activities relate to meeting the goals set in our Strategic Plan, and this part of the annual report will take a different approach by allowing each department to share their top accomplishment.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES - AMY LITKE

The Children's Department has always offered many programs annually for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, both in the library and at outreach locations. Programs for school aged children were mainly limited to the summer with other scattered events through the year.

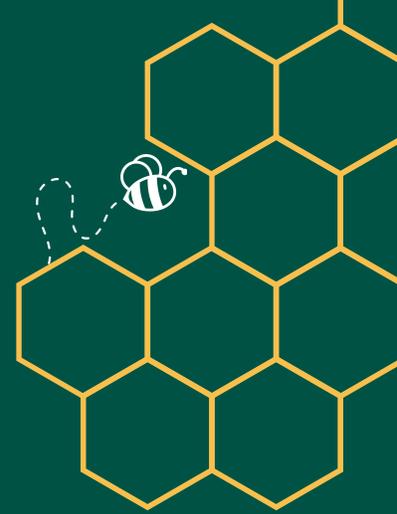
We looked at days and times that we could offer programs for older children, and began offering Minecraft Club, then Pokemon Club monthly on Saturday afternoons. Crafts are always popular, so the Crafty Creatives Club was developed, and is offered weekly late on Wednesday afternoons. This has proven to be successful, so an early evening STEAM program will be held weekly on Mondays this year.

To take advantage of homeschooled children being available during the day, the Homeschool Program was developed by staff from the Children's, Teen and Adult Departments. Cara, Brett & Rachel introduced STEAM concepts to the children, followed by activities which demonstrated those concepts. This was a nice collaboration between departments, and a very popular offering.

With all of these added programs, which fit seamlessly in the programs that we already offered, the number of programs for 6-12 years olds rose from 40 in FY 2023/24 to 95 in FY 2024/25.

YOUNG ADULT SERVICES - BRETT GARABEDIAN

For this fiscal year, the teen department is incredibly proud to have reintroduced the Homework Center to 6th-12th graders in New Britain. The return of the Homework Center comes after a multi year absence and has been frequently requested by both parents and teachers. In total, we held 230 appointments. Being down a tutor for a period of time unfortunately led to us also being down a day of availability. This eventually worked in our favor for building interest, as many families preferred the upcoming Wednesday night time slot that would be available once the additional tutor, Patrick started. In fact, many students saved slots ahead of time, increasing usage rate. We served 68 middle school students and 81 high school students. Overall, we are very happy with the results of the program and are excited to bring it back again this fall.



ADULT SERVICES & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - KARI BURGESS

Over the past year, the department has partnered with numerous New Britain organizations to expand access to information, programs, and services for the community.

Danielle facilitated a monthly book club at the Senior Center, the library collaborated with Central Connecticut State University in April for a Latin American Poetry series, and Rachel led adult storytime and craft sessions for Best Buddies and CCARC. Amal and Izabella launched Makerspace projects to create handmade hats and scarves for donation to those in need, while Mads expanded the Seed Library with help from UCONN Master Gardeners and New Britain Roots, distributing over 1,000 seed packets.

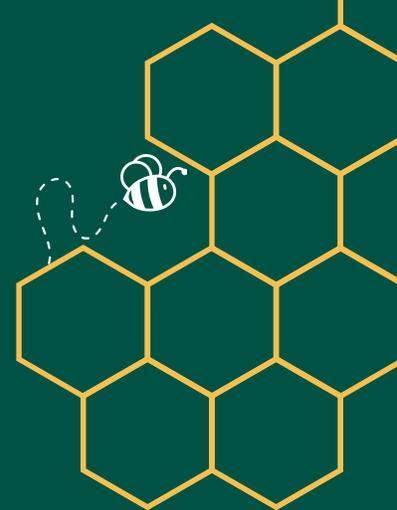
Jason built partnerships to bring monthly visits from The American Job Center to assist job seekers and weekly visits from The Friendship Center supporting individuals experiencing homelessness. In May, Jason and Kari organized the library's first Community Mental Health Fair, featuring over 10 local wellness organizations. The team also expanded outreach efforts, representing the library at events like Main Street Market, Pride, the Polish Festival, Celebrate New Britain, New Britain Museum of American Art's All Access Community Days, and more.

Jen significantly enhanced communication about library programs by managing the new website calendar, editing the redesigned print newsletter, and distributing newsletters to organizations across the city.

These collective efforts demonstrate the library's commitment to accessibility, collaboration, and meeting the evolving needs of New Britain residents.

JEFFERSON BRANCH LIBRARY - ADRIANA PULIT

The Jefferson Branch made major strides in availability this past year. Families and caregivers can now take advantage of loaning Toonie boxes and figures. Whether they already have a box or they do not, families can interact with this highly sought-after screen-free device and enjoy these stories and songs at home. The figurines and boxes can drive up a hefty price tag. Having access to a large library of figures they can use on their device at home, the device can keep families entertained and learning at home. Children are able to select their favorite characters from popular movies, shows and books. When connected to any toonie box the figures sing, tell stories and play music for little ones. Children can engage with their favorite characters or learn basic life skills like independence in personal care. The library was also able to extend their hours for users; at the start of the year when not fully staffed, the library had to close for 1 hour to accommodate staff breaks. Since hiring a branch manager, the library is now able to remain continuously open during the day for users allowing for users to have more opportunities to come by.



CIRCULATION - LUCY WERKHEISER

Reflecting on FY 24/25, I am especially proud of the exceptional teamwork and adaptability shown by our circulation staff. Throughout the year, they consistently went above and beyond their core responsibilities, stepping in to support other departments during critical times.

When the Jefferson Branch operated with only two staff members from January through June, circulation staff filled in without hesitation, ensuring consistent service to the community. They also stepped in to cover desk hours in the Children's Department after the loss of one longtime employee, followed closely by the retirement of another. This allowed programs and outreach to continue uninterrupted for young patrons and their families.

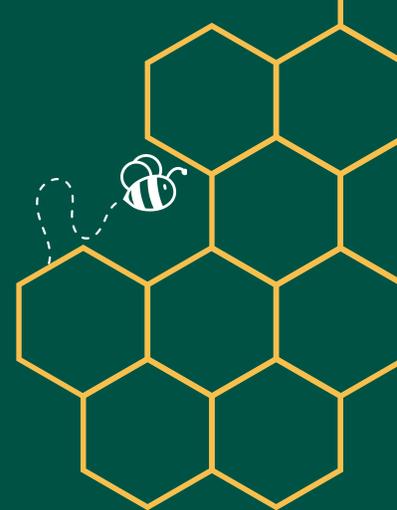
Circulation staff have also actively participated in off-site events—volunteering at fundraisers, community festivals, and numerous outreach efforts. Their commitment to representing the library outside its walls has strengthened community connections and expanded our reach.

Time and again, the circulation department has proven itself to be flexible, dependable, and deeply committed to serving both colleagues and patrons alike. Their willingness to step in wherever and whenever needed has been instrumental to the library's success this fiscal year, and I could not be more grateful for their dedication and collaborative spirit.

TECHNICAL SERVICES - MEGAN THOMPSON

The Technical Services Department's biggest accomplishment this year was relabeling various areas of the collection. After years of printing spine labels using an inferior technology that resulted in pervasive fading, we upgraded our label printers and began work on relabeling areas where the illegible spine labels were a hindrance to access. We also added labels to collections that had previously had none, such as children's graphic novels and the entire young adult fiction area.

One of the sections we identified as having the most need for new labels was adult fiction. Additionally, the adult fiction books had not been assessed on a large-scale for many years, and the shelves were overfilled and not patron friendly. Technical Services staff took on the massive weeding project and were able to remove many books in poor condition and of low community interest. The previously overcrowded shelves are now much easier to browse, and have room for "face-out" displays and "shelf-talkers" - small hanging signs creatively designed by Technical Services staff to highlight fiction books. Weeding also cleared the way for the much needed relabeling. The new labels are bright and clear and much easier to read, resulting in improved accessibility for patrons and staff.

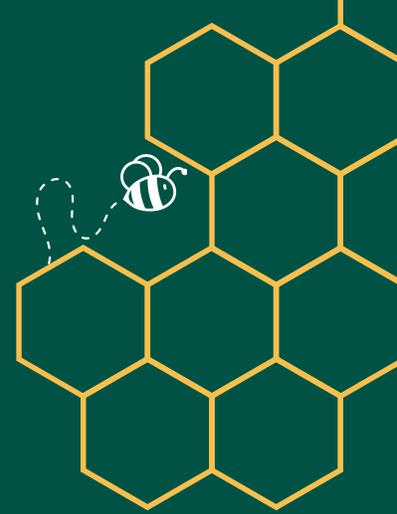


HUMAN RESOURCES - BETH IACAMPO

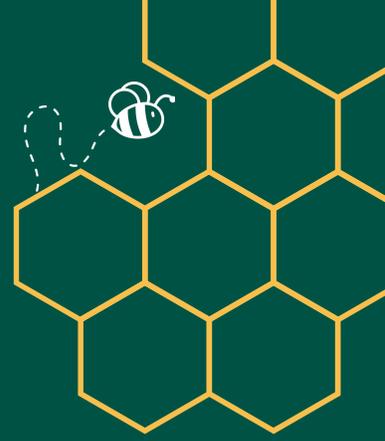
It was a very busy year for the HR Office. After much deliberation and many vendor demonstrations, it was determined that ADP would be the most viable option for our HR/Payroll system. The implementation commenced at the end of February and was deemed complete at the end of June. We continue to wrestle with the new system, as it not as intuitive or user-friendly as we had hoped.

During the transition, there were several vacant positions posted (12 total hires for the year), requiring a patchwork of communications and toggling between the systems to ensure that our new staff members were hired and on-boarded properly and expeditiously.

The journey to create a new Employee Handbook began four years ago, but the handbook was left in draft status due to the opinion of our previous labor attorney that it was unnecessary. Happily, our new labor attorney concurred that we could, and should, provide an updated Employee Handbook. With significant input from the ad hoc board committee created for the purpose of finalizing the document, we were able to make it a reality.



FACILITIES - BUSINESS MANAGER JAZZ COAKLEY



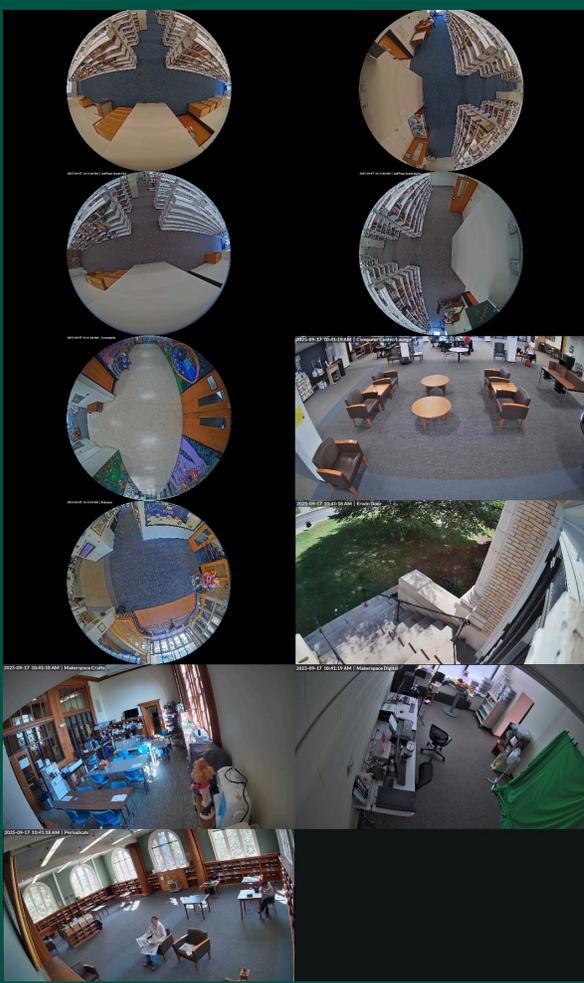
GOAL 3: BUILDING: PROVIDE HEALTHY, SAFE SPACE



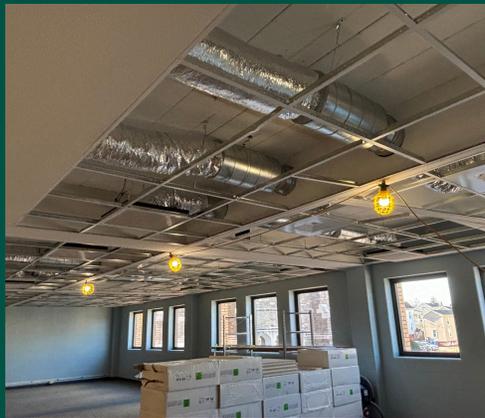
July 2024: The Library's landscaping was renovated to bolster the building's aesthetics, as well as promote health and safety measures in minimizing outdoor areas where encampments can be built, where food, clothing, and substances can be stored, or illegal activities can take place. This new open landscape has reduced invasive species, and allows the opportunity for future partnerships with local gardeners, naturalists, etc.



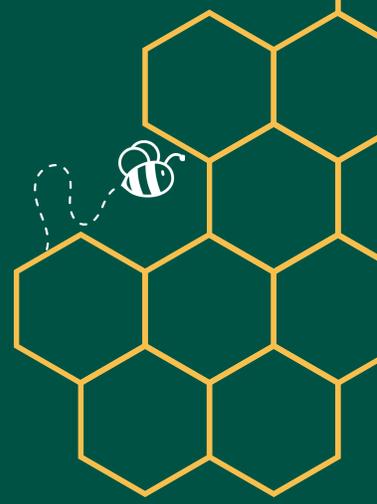
August-December 2024: The Library's phone system were upgraded to a Voice-Over-IP (VOIP) system at both the Main and Jefferson branches. This upgrade provides technological advantages to promote workforce productivity, efficiency, and bolsters various forms of communication amongst staff and the community.



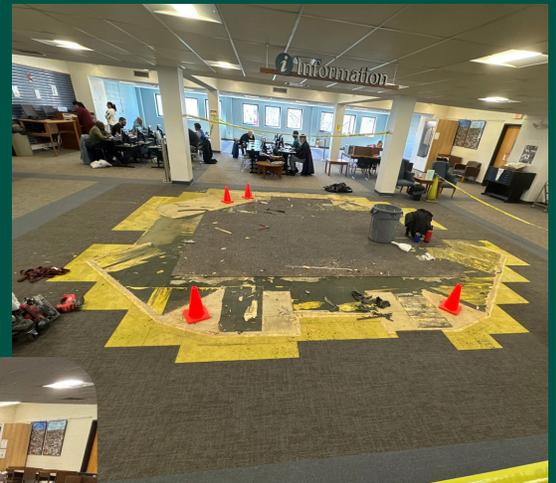
October 2024–March 2025: CCTV Surveillance upgrade were installing eleven interior cameras at the front/back entrances, Information/Circulation desk area, Makerspace, AV Room, Ground Floor, Computer Center, Periodical Room, 2nd and 3rd Floor Stacks, and an exterior camera has been installed at the front entrance of the Erwin building. These upgrades support safety and security inside and outside the library for both patrons and staff in providing a communal safe space.



2024–2025: The construction of the Study Room Project, now known as The Vance Forum, in the Cooper Building was completed. The rooms have been furnished, and a Smartboard has been installed. The rooms are receiving steady use serving as multi-functional spaces providing quiet space for studying or meeting one-on-one, library programming, or conference spaces for larger groups. Patrons, staff, and local organizations utilize these rooms free of charge through a reservation system or walk-in upon availability.



December 2024–February 2025: The old Information Desk was disassembled and replaced by a seating area. The Circulation Desk was expanded to accommodate an Information Desk as well. The consolidation of the two desks supports workspace functionality, bolsters efficiency, cross-departmental support, maximize use of library spaces, and conveniently serves patrons from one central location.



STATISTICS

		FY 2025	FY 2024
	Total Library Days Open Main	297	296
	Total Library Days Open Jefferson	245	247
	Total Visitors On-Site Main	158250	150983
	Total Visitors On-Site Jefferson	13722	13340

Library Services		FY 2025	FY 2024		
Main Branch		Jefferson Branch			
	Circulation of Library Materials	186497	198245	19626	19028
	eAudiobook/eBook/eMagazine Downloads	27353	20819		
	Audio/Video Streaming	2916	2084		
	Circulation Total	216766	221148		
	Library Cards Issued	3524	3997	221	159
	Total Library Card Holders	11640	11462		
	Reference Questions	11014	13906	1701	1159

Technology

	Library Website Sessions	67186	59637
	In-House Computer Use	22647	18987
	WiFi Usage	2954	Not Available

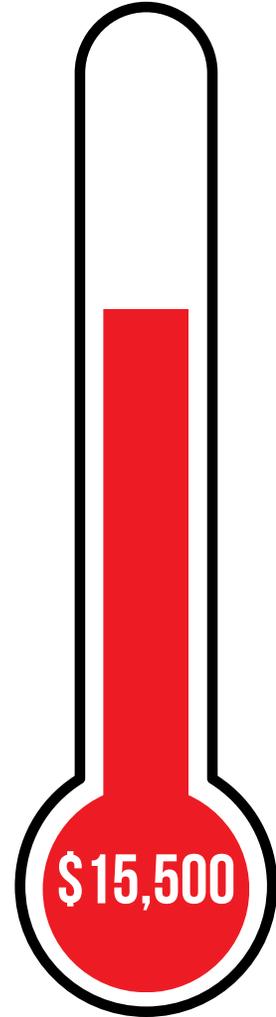
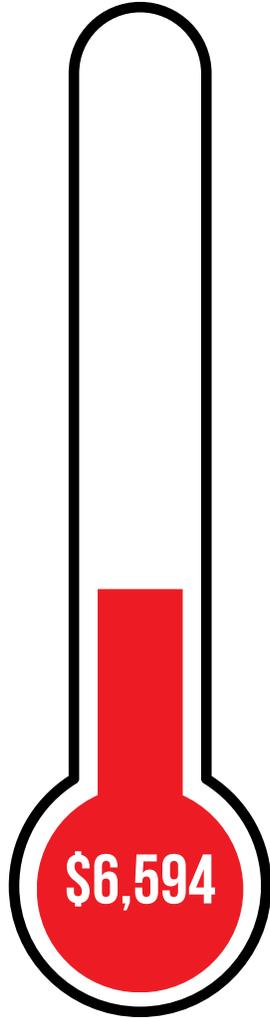
Outreach & Programming

	Number of Programs Presented <i>(on-site, off-site, includes virtual)</i>	1286	921
	Program Attendance	20748	18108

Facility Usage

	Number of Community Room Reservations	182	168
	Community Room Attendance	2912	2016

FUNDRAISING



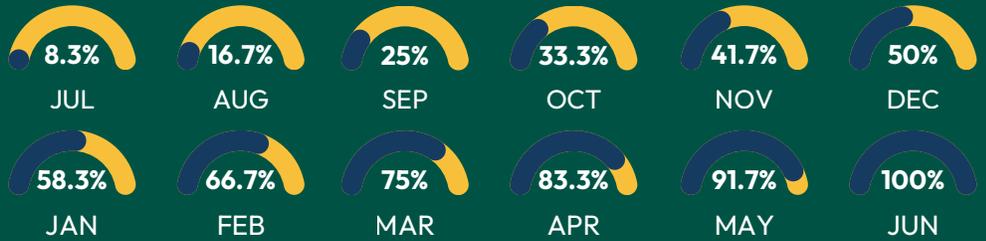
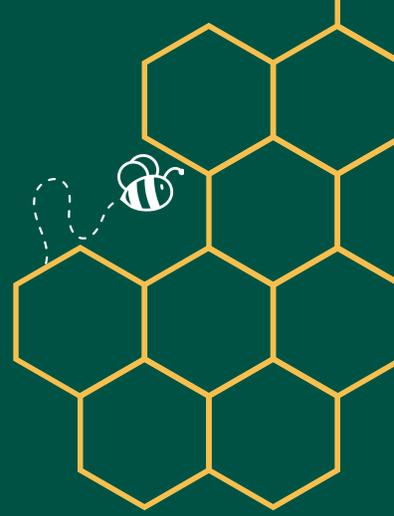
The Board of Trustees of the NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY invites you to attend its 9TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

NEW BRITAIN READS NEW BRITAIN LEADS



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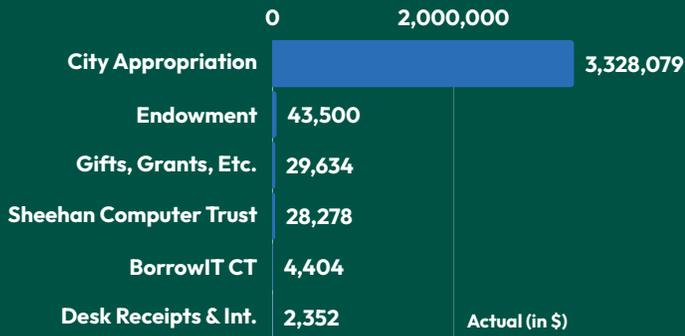
ANNUAL FINANCIALS



Monthly target expenditure percentages over 12 month fiscal period

REVENUE BREAKDOWN

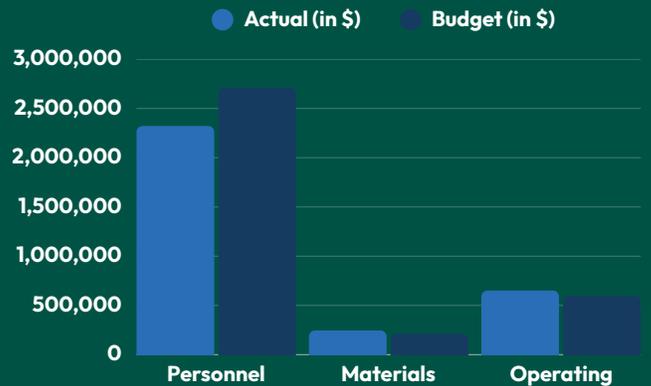
Year-to-date total revenues: **\$3,436,247**



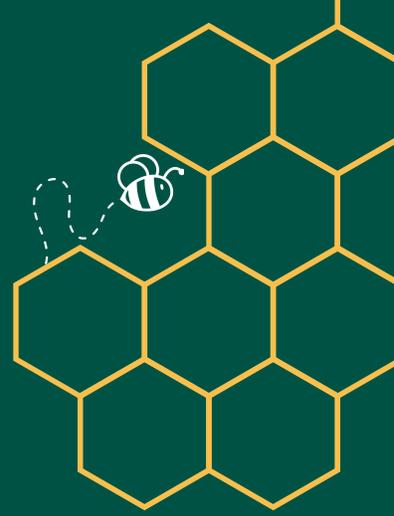
* Revenue applied to special project classes instead of operational budget

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Year-to-date total expenses: **\$3,218,998**



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