



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County



Introduction

At The Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County (PLYMC), our mission is to provide equal and exemplary access to information for every single one of our patrons.

We Share. We Create. We Grow.

A well-informed and educated population is the cornerstone of a successful and prosperous community.

Since our founding in 1880, our vision for a thriving Mahoning County has never wavered, providing access to high quality education and creating opportunities for every person to take the next step in their lifetime of literacy.

What does it cost?

PLYMC is funded by two major sources of revenue, both of which are accountable to the community which we proudly serve.

The Public Library Fund: Accounting for 47% of our annual revenue, this fund is the lifeblood of our system. Drafted and Approved by your elected representatives in Columbus within the larger State Budget, this money is distributed to public libraries throughout the state, ensuring that doors remain open, books remain on shelves and our programs and services remain available to everyone.

General Property Tax: This operating tax levy, voted on by Mahoning County every five years, accounts for 43% of our revenue but only accounts for 1% of the amount that property owners in our community pay.

The efficient use of tax dollars drives all of the financial decisions that our leadership and our Board of Trustees make. From the program expenses to every major renovation, we commit to a thorough and detailed accounting of the need, efficacy, and longevity of the purchase, so our funding is used wisely and efficiently. In fact, for each dollar of tax money spent on our library, the community gets almost \$2.00 back in value. That's almost a 100% return on investment.

2024

Throughout 2024, our team worked diligently with our friends and neighbors. With an aim to provide transformative experiences and serve as a cornerstone to our community, we continue to empower our staff to serve the public with professionalism, knowledge, compassion and expertise.

In 2024, we continued to flex our programming muscles, hosting more than 5,700 programs for children, teens, families and adults. We strengthened our partnerships and collaborative efforts, and we enhanced our services to meet the evolving needs of our service area.

Our impactful and influential programs and services are directly supported by tax dollars. Our primary goal as stewards of public money is to use these dollars wisely and efficiently, thus having the highest impact possible for our community.



What We Value

These four pillars of our Library were established to lead us in our daily decision-making processes.

People

We welcome every person and help them build the skills necessary to achieve their goals and reach their potential.

Community

We actively engage with our community to foster relationships and connections to create a greater sense of belonging for all.

Integrity

Honest action is at the center of every decision we make, from our use of public resources to the information and services we provide.

Adaptability

We learn and grow with our community to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. PLYMC emphasizes the importance of traditional library services alongside emerging needs for specialized spaces.



"Since becoming a patron of the Early Literacy program, I've seen a remarkable change in my child's enthusiasm for reading. They now actively seek out books, point out letters, and even try to sound out words. The program's focus on interactive storytelling and home-based activities has given them a strong foundation for future success in school." -Courtney P.

From our pop-up libraries, community engagement events and throughout our 14 branches, we serve everyone without exception. While our library system has evolved and adapted to the more modern needs of our community, we continue to value our past and a shared vision of PLYMC as an open, free, and adaptable community hub.



Patron Engagement and Enrichment

Throughout 2024, we worked to meet our patrons where they are. Our team worked diligently to partner with our friends and neighbors to provide transformative experiences and serve as a cornerstone to our community. We continue to empower our staff to serve the public with professionalism, knowledge, compassion and expertise.

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As of January 8th, 2025, 17.3% of our 86,657 patrons had items in our collection checked out, with an average of 3.8 items per patron.



With an average of 9.5 years of service to PLYMC, our team of over 200 dedicated and passionate public servants strive every day to open our doors to our community.

In 2024 alone, PLYMC saw 670,000 individual visits to our branches with our team greeting every one of them.

Our IT team is on call Monday through Saturday with a combined 82 years of systems and technology experience at their disposal.

"Public libraries are addressing the digital divide by providing free internet access and Wi-Fi hotspots that members can borrow and use at home. This is especially important for individuals who may not have reliable internet access at home or who need to work or study remotely." - Rev. Lewis Macklin



Patron Engagement and Enrichment



"Sometimes, it can be hard to encourage your child to read for fun, as you want it to come naturally. A great summer reading program can help peak your child's interest in a particular subject and encourage them to seek out books on that subject. They began to see reading as something they could do for fun rather than just as part of a school assignment." - Brittany F.

Summer Discovery

One of the programs we are most proud of is our Summer Discovery program.

Participation is free and our friends and neighbors read books and discover new tools to encourage the love of reading. Summer Discovery continued its growth in 2024 with both registration and completion showing continued increases since 2020.

Total registrations for Summer Discovery increased 18% from the prior year (4,238 in 2024, compared to 3,583 in 2023).

Ages 6-11 remains the largest age group for participants with 1,294 registered, representing 31% of total registrations.

The completion rate was at 47% in 2024, up from 34% the previous year. This equates to 1,982 participants who completed the program, up from 1,211 in 2023.

Solar Eclipse

2024 saw a dedicated effort to celebrate the Solar Eclipse, providing free glasses to the community as well as hosting watch parties throughout our branches.

Canfield Fair

At the annual Canfield Fair in September, our team sponsored the Rooster Visit, greeting and connecting with fairgoers about our love for the library and further celebrating our place in Mahoning County.

Culinary Literacy

One of our most talked about programming departments is our Culinary Literacy Kitchen. Conducting over 110 programs 2024 for teens, adults and families, this specialized set of classes goes far beyond cooking tasty dishes. Our team has helped guide young parents around a kitchen and helped many grateful members of our senior community with skills to live independently after the loss of a spouse or partner.



Community and Civic Engagement

Levy Campaign, 2024

Mahoning County voters once again voted to continue support for our PLYMC by approving a renewal of the Property Tax Levy. This funding accounts for almost 50% of our annual budget and it is essential to not only for our funding, but also a barometer of the impact we have on our community.

Building Partnerships

In 2024, PLYMC took major strides in developing deeper and more collaborative relationships with important organizations in our region like the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber, participating in many key gatherings across the community to deepen relationships with both business leaders and elected officials. We are also actively involved with the Population Coalition of the Regional Chamber, giving us better insight into the needs of our community as it grows and evolves.

American Heart Association

In February 2024, we partnered with the American Heart Association to place blood pressure monitoring stations at all of our branches. These stations, in addition to the monitoring equipment available through our Library of Things, give our patrons additional resources to stay healthy.

Eastgate

Library collaboration with Eastgate Regional Council of Governments is a strategic partnership focusing on fostering regional development. Through this collaboration, our library works closely with local government entities to provide resources, programs, and services that meet the specific needs of residents. PLYMC is now a participant in Eastgate's Technical Advisory Committee along with other community leaders and organizations.

Business Resource Fair

In December, The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County hosted a Business Resource Fair at Main Library with 30 local, state, and federal agencies participating, and almost 100 people from the community. The event was an incredible success and an example of how the library is an effective convener of community resources to assist business leaders and entrepreneurs get access to vital resources to be successful in their work.



Population and Talent Expansion Council of the Chamber Board of Directors

Since mid – 2024, PLYMC has been an active participant in the Population and Talent Expansion Council of the Chamber Board of Directors, formerly known as the Population Coalition. Helping to pave the way for new talent to enter the workforce in the Mahoning Valley, the Library plays a critical role in helping to make the area an inviting home for new families and working with existing families to receive the training they need to thrive in our local economy through family literacy and workforce development programs.



Financials

GENERAL FUND 12/31/24

Encumbered Balance	\$1,469,486.86
Balance Forward	13,690,651.08
Receipts	
Public Library Fund	10,279,262.36
Property Tax	9,417,179.63
Intergovernmental	1,110,837.25
Patron Fines & Fees	104,818.82
Interest Income	748,207.39
Rental/Lease Income	21,875.00
Miscellaneous	52,976.29
Total Receipts & Balances	\$36,895,294.68

Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	\$14,004,775.24
Supplies	874,486.40
Capital Outlay	3,276,774.34
Library Materials	1,792,790.94
Equipment	133,539.31
Other Objects	50,604.07
Transfers To Other Funds	2,500,000.00
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/24	1,856,560.83
Balance Forward, 12/31/24	12,405,763.55
Total Expenses & Balance	\$36,895,294.68

BUILDING & REPAIR FUND 12/31/24

Encumbered Balance	\$100,550.80
Balance Forward	21,069,766.81
Receipts	
Interest Income	774,457.76
Contributions	-
Miscellaneous	-
Transfers From Other Funds	2,000,000.00
Total Receipts & Balance	\$23,944,775.37

Expenses

Investment/Banking Fees	\$10,585.71
New Buildings	-
Building Improvements	284,803.74
Equipment	-
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/24	410,999.22
Balance Forward, 12/31/24	23,238,386.70
Total Expenses & Balances	\$23,944,775.37

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT FUND 12/31/24

Encumbered Balance	\$31,386.75
Balance Forward	3,860,386.39
Receipts	
Federal Grant/E-Rate	\$17,484.45
Interest Income	18,182.17
Transfers From Other Funds	500,000.00
Total Receipts & Balance	\$4,427,439.76
Expenses	
Investment/Banking Fees	\$548.73
Equipment	257,912.20
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/24	56,867.69
Balance Forward, 12/31/24	4,112,111.14
Total Expenses & Balance	\$4,427,439.76

LIBRARY FOUNDATION 12/31/24

Balance Forward	\$1,730,171.36
Receipts	
Distributions from Trust Funds	170,051.06
Contributions	267,913.51
Miscellaneous	88.20
Interest & Investment Income	64,535.39
Total Receipts & Balance	\$2,232,759.52
Expenses	
Books & Related Purchases	\$ 89,920.39
Audit Fees	10,300.00
Legal Fees	-
Marketing Costs	30,000.00
Miscellaneous	4,805.69
Memorial gifts	-
Balance Forward, 12/31/24	2,097,733.44
Total Expenses & Balance	\$2,232,759.52



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