



2025 Annual Report

The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County



A Foundry of Information

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.**

Since our founding in 1880, our mission to achieve a thriving community has never wavered. PLYMC provides access to high quality education, information and services, creating opportunities for our friends and neighbors across Mahoning County.

What We Value

Four pillars drive our daily decision-making process:

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 evolve and grow with our community to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

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.





Patron Engagement and Enrichment

PLYMC's core principle is to encourage and provide access to all types of information. In 2025, patrons across the county checked out 1,601,673 from our 14 locations, Pop-up Library, and through our Special Delivery and Books by Mail services. They were supported in those choices by our 214 staff members who have an average of 9.5 years of experience serving needs of Mahoning County residents.

In 2025, PLYMC had over 95,000 individual library card holders, with 73% being over the age of 18. As of January 1st, 2026, 15.6% of our patrons had items checked out. Our staff welcomed 673,461 visitors through our doors, welcoming and informing each one about the resources and services available to them.

With 97,978 unique computer uses across our 14 locations in 2025, in addition to laptops and tablets available for checkout, technology continues to play a major role in our commitment to providing equal and exemplary access to information for every single one of our patrons.

In addition to the thousands of items in our collection, as well as our amazing staff, PLYMC is also home to an incredible network of publicly available spaces, all of which are accessible to the community. In 2025, study and meeting rooms, as well as the Sensory Room in Boardman Library, were reserved a total of 21,483 times for Library programs, private reservations, and partner events. Except for the Event Space and Culinary Literacy Center at Main Library, reservations for Library spaces can be made at no additional cost to Mahoning County residents.



Patron Engagement and Enrichment

Program Stats

With 6,439 programs scheduled across Mahoning County in 2025, each of our branches - suburban, rural or city based – excel at creating and running programs for all ages and interests. Program topics range from annual tax help, engaging with service animals, Dungeons and Dragons, the tried-and-true crafting, even coding programs aimed at grades 3-5! Our specially trained staff have created and hosted programs attended by over 111,000 people in 2025.



Reference Stats

People come to libraries with questions: “Do you have a book on small engine maintenance?” or “Is there any way to see my past social security benefits?” Chances are, Library staff have an answer. With 162,306 reference questions submitted to PLYMC, our team goes above and beyond in ensuring that members of the public have access to any information they seek. PLYMC consistently charts stronger in reference questions than other libraries of our size. For instance, PLYMC staff logged 174,564 instances in FY22, markedly higher than the cohort mean count of 88,671 (median: 67,437). It ranked first among the 12 libraries under study.*

*Source: PLYMC Peer Benchmark Study Conducted by Library Strategies



Patron Engagement and Enrichment

Specialty Services

PLYMC is incredibly fortunate to have a team of specialists whose focus is dedicated to specific areas of library work, including digitization, business and nonprofits, local history and genealogy, and career development all find a home in our Specialty Services Department. Our team in Specialty Services collaborated with local organizations on historical programming, presented at Valley Partners business classes, hosted a Housing Resource Summit, a Small Business Resource Fair, and worked with YSU Small Business Development Center to create video tutorials of business resources and continue to help frame PLYMC's programming heading into America 250 celebrations in 2026.

They've co-hosted the "From Ghost Jobs to Phishing: Staying Safe in Today's Job Market" training program with Ohio Means Jobs, and celebrated National Skilled Trades Day with a "Cheers to Beers" event at Penguin City Brewing.

In September of 2025, The Mayflower Society presented PLYMC with the Mayflower Silver Projects books. This unique set of books tracks lineage from the passengers aboard the historic Mayflower voyage. This donation of all the current Silver Projects books will also be kept up to date in perpetuity, as new editions will be added to our collection. In 2025, our digitization lab made efforts to preserve historical photographs of our library throughout our history.

In a more one-on-one interaction, Specialty Services Supervisor Sara Churchill helped a patron through a spur-of-the-moment Book-a-Librarian reservation. This outstanding customer service and diligence resulted in a spontaneous \$200.00 donation to the Library Foundation!



Patron Engagement and Enrichment

Family Place

One of the many ways PLYMC excels in serving our community is by creating and supporting accessible, impactful services and programs. In early 2025, members of our staff began training to launch the first of its kind in our region: A Family Place Library.

The Family Place Libraries™ initiative promotes a national model for transforming public libraries into welcoming, developmentally appropriate early learning environments for very young children, their parents and caregivers. By partnering and working with other social, health and educational services providers, the Family Place model aims to ensure that all children enter school ready and able to learn and positions libraries as key early childhood and family support organizations within the local community.

Our Michael Kusalaba branch on the west side of Youngstown was specifically chosen for this project due to the high concentration of young families in the community. Every division at PLYMC played a major role in launching this incredible project and the public showed their support as well, contributing over \$25,000 during our 2025 annual campaign to fund various aspects of The Family Place library.



Summer Discovery

PLYMC's best-known annual program is another example of great teamwork, honed over successive generations of skilled and well-trained staff. Summer Discovery was designed to prevent learning loss among school age children over summer but now has grown to include patrons of all ages.

Total registrations for Summer Discovery increased 30% from the prior year (5,505 in 2025, compared to 4,238 in 2024) in every age category, with strongest growth noted among adults and group registrations, such as daycares.

The completion rate hit an amazing 58% this year versus 47% last year. This equates to 3,185 participants who completed the program, up from 1,982 last year. Like all PLYMC programs, Summer Discovery remains available to everyone free of charge.



Community and Civic Engagement

Creation of the Stakeholder Relations Division

After the successful Levy campaign of 2024, the need to cohesively tell the library's story became more apparent. With the changing political landscape in the region, as well as the state, and in anticipation of more robust fights for funding, the decision was made to launch and roll out a brand-new division at PLYMC. The Stakeholder Relations Division, now housing the Donor Relations Team, as well as Strategic Communications and Government Affairs, was tasked in September of 2025 with crafting and deploying a unified message on behalf of the library.

Supporting the Public Library Fund

In 2025, Ohio legislators debated shifting the PLF from a fixed percentage of the General Revenue Fund to a flat line-item appropriation, leading to reduced long-term funding stability. The Governor proposed increasing the PLF percentage, but the Ohio House reduced funding and advanced the structural change. Library leaders advocated statewide, emphasizing the importance of stable funding for community services. The final budget adopted the line-item model, reducing net funding starting July 1, 2025, although controversial "materials restriction" language was vetoed by the Governor.

PLYMC actively participated in legislative advocacy, with CEO Aimee Fifarek testifying before the Ohio Senate Education Committee on May 12, 2025, to advocate for PLF funding on behalf of Mahoning Valley residents. This advocacy received coverage in state-wide and local media, underscoring the library's role in the community and the importance of protecting PLF funding.



Community and Civic Engagement

Building Partnerships

In collaboration with the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office, PLYMC helped deliver the People's Law School, a free public legal education series hosted at the Boardman Library. This partnership strengthened ties with the Prosecutor's Office and was covered by local media, highlighting the program's community impact.

In 2025, PLYMC partnered with Akron Children's Hospital to provide mobile pediatric health services at the Main Library.

In response to the growing levels of food insecurity in our community, PLYMC was proud to launch food drives at each of our Society of St. Vincent de Paul to host food drives at library branches supporting families in need and regularly partners with Children's Hunger Alliance to provide healthy food during summer months. These collaborations received regional media coverage, emphasizing the library's role as a community access point for health and social services.

In addition to seasonal efforts, PLYMC enjoys productive and impactful partnerships with the American Red Cross (county wide blood drives), United Way of Youngstown and Mahoning Valley (Imagination Library) and the American Heart Association, (Blood Pressure Monitoring stations are available in all PLYMC locations, and portable monitors are available through our Library of Things!)



Master Facilities Plan

In late 2024, a Master Facilities Plan was commissioned by PLYMC to assess and analyze the buildings and facilities within the system. Using proven techniques and data collection methods, in addition to stakeholder, staff and public feedback, a set of recommendations was presented to the Board of Trustees for the 13 branch libraries and the space that houses the Community Engagement Team. It also provided valuable insight into what Mahoning County residents are looking for in future facilities and renovation projects.

The Library Foundation of Youngstown and Mahoning County

In 2025, the Library Foundation began refocusing and refining its methodology for extending the impact of public monies through private donations. Spring of 2025 saw another successful Ladies in Little Black Dresses for Literacy as well as a spring campaign benefitting the purchase of a new bookmobile.

Moving under the new Stakeholder Relations Division in September of 2025, the PLYMC Donor Relations Team was able to implement new accounting software and increase the effectiveness of its donor information,, resulting in an accountable and efficient gift processing system.

At the end of the year, The Library Foundation dedicated its 2025 annual campaign to supporting the Family Place™ program at Michael Kusalaba. Using traditional letters, as well as digital platforms, the Library Foundation collected over \$40,000 in a period of 3 months, with \$25,338 being earmarked for Family Place.



What does it Cost?

PLYMC is funded by two major sources of revenue, both of which ensure we remain 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 by formula to public libraries throughout the state, ensuring that doors remain open, books remain on shelves and we remain available to everyone.

General Property Tax

This operating tax levy, voted on by Mahoning County residents every five years, accounts for 43% of our revenue but only accounts for an average of 1% of the amount that property owners in our community pay. These funds complement our PLF funding, ensuring we continue to deliver the programs and services Mahoning County residents expect from their Library.

The efficient use of tax dollars drives every financial decision that PLYMC makes. From program expenses to major renovations, 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.





Financials

General Fund 12/31/25

Encumbered Balance	\$1,856,560.83
Balance Forward	10,936,276.69
Receipts	
Public Library Fund	10,477,769.49
Property Tax	9,472,745.08
Intergovernmental	1,059,271.65
Patron Fines & Fees	108,143.65
Interest Income	645,807.50
Rental/Lease Income	23,325.00
Miscellaneous	118,179.06
Total Receipts & Balances	\$34,698,078.95
Expenses	
Salaries & Benefits	\$14,960,830.55
Supplies	909,064.22
Capital Outlay	3,458,380.21
Library Materials	1,929,044.60
Equipment	418,679.01
Other Objects	83,855.42
Transfers To Other Funds	1,000,000.00
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/25	2,599,678.77
Balance Forward, 12/31/25	9,338,546.17
Total Expenses & Balance	\$34,698,078.95

Building & Repair Fund 12/31/25

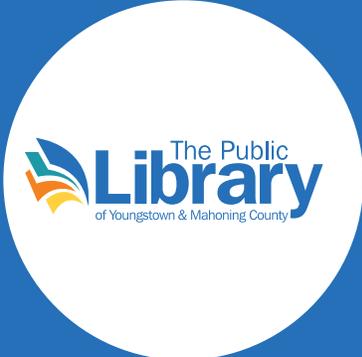
Encumbered Balance	\$410,999.22
Balance Forward	23,137,835.90
Receipts	
Interest Income	672,511.56
Contributions	-
Miscellaneous	-
Transfers From Other Funds	1,000,000.00
Total Receipts & Balance	\$25,221,346.68
Expenses	
Investment/Banking Fees	\$10,601.29
New Buildings	-
Building Improvements	1,034,196.10
Equipment	-
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/25	878,269.75
Balance Forward, 12/31/25	23,298,279.54
Total Expenses & Balances	\$25,221,346.68

Technology Development Fund 12/31/25

Encumbered Balance	\$56,867.69
Balance Forward	4,080,724.39
Receipts	
Federal Grant/E-Rate	\$5,295.50
Interest Income	22,955.12
Transfers From Other Funds	-
Total Receipts & Balance	\$4,165,842.70
Expenses	
Investment/Banking Fees	\$544.00
Equipment	288,642.30
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/25	5,890.04
Balance Forward, 12/31/25	3,870,766.36
Total Expenses & Balance	\$4,165,842.70

Library Foundation 12/31/25

Balance Forward	\$2,097,733.44
Receipts	
Distributions from Trust Funds	195,730.86
Contributions	136,390.14
Miscellaneous	11,356.06
Interest & Investment Income	58,417.05
Total Receipts & Balance	\$2,499,627.55
Expenses	
Books & Related Purchases	\$388,935.25
Audit Fees	-
Legal Fees	-
Marketing Costs	-
Miscellaneous	8,131.93
Memorial gifts	-
Balance Forward, 12/31/25	2,102,560.37
Total Expenses & Balance	\$2,499,627.55



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