2022 Annual Report to the Community
Learn, Enjoy, Connect with your Community
The Pierce County Library System returned to more familiar pre-COVID-19 services in 2022. In January 2022, Library staff continued offering virtual classes and events, and introduced outdoor in-person events in April. Indoor in-person events started in July in time for Summer Reading. The Library System reopened study rooms and meeting rooms to the public in the fall. Whether in-person or through Library Curbside, staff continued to serve communities with their expertise and exceptional customer service.

The Board of Trustees appointed Gretchen Caserotti as the Library’s fifth executive director in March 2022. Previously, Caserotti was the library director with the Meridian Library District in Meridian, Idaho, where she served since 2013.

The Library System experienced significant changes in 2022, and with that newness welcomes opportunity.
Learning

The Library supports growth and curiosity, so children enter kindergarten ready to learn and people of all ages can navigate the real world and meet their goals.

“She’s working really hard on her words and being able to share all of her beautiful thoughts. I’m excited for her to be able to get out and enjoy all the beautiful things just like every other kid.”

–Nicole Emery, mother of 4-year-old Penny at Autism-Ready Story Time
Autism-Ready Story Time pilot:
In partnership with Autism-Ready Libraries from the University of Washington, the Library System hosted 11 families for two story time experiences designed for children with sensory and learning differences. The inclusive hands-on story time helps children gain early literacy skills.

Digital literacy
154 people spent 82 learning hours using Northstar Digital Literacy, a self-paced online learning platform that helps people learn computer and internet basics. The most popular topic studied was Computer Basics, followed by Internet Basics and Microsoft Word.
Enjoyment

The Pierce County Library helps people enjoy their free time, so they discover outlets to offset the pressures of daily life, relax, and live balanced lives.

Summer Reading program

Nearly 15,000 children, teens and adults participated in the Summer Reading program, Read Beyond the Beaten Path. Submissions from a kids’ art contest pilot will be included in the 2023 Summer Reading program.

Enjoy BOOKS! featured online programs:

- Fostering a love of reading with the 10 to Try Reading Challenge, featuring 10 different categories.

- Preparing children for school with a 100 Books Every Child Should Hear Before Kindergarten book list.

Cardholders saved $385,618,930.17 checking out books and materials from their Pierce County Library in 2022.
Community

The Pierce County Library connects and strengthens communities, so people are engaged in thriving communities and are optimistic about their future.

Library staff returned to engaging with communities outside of library buildings, delivering services for children, teens and adults by participating in more than 100 parades, festivals, fairs, and community and school events.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy: Continued progress was made on a multi-year, strategic framework and implementation plan to strengthen the Library’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion as a workplace and community resource.

“I love the huge push for diverse reads and speaking truth.”

—Michele Shree Barnett, Pierce County Library System cardholder
Core Services

The Library System continually strengthens its core services to operate effectively and carefully advance taxpayers’ investment. Some of its 2022 improvements include the following.

Materials

• Surpassed 2 million digital book checkouts—the most ever!—in 2022. The Pierce County Library was one of just 25 libraries worldwide to exceed 2 million digital checkouts.

Staff

• Connected more community members with services and books by participating in local events and engagement opportunities outside of library buildings.

• Awarded the WellCity Award for the seventh year in a row for achieving quality standards in employee health promotion.

• Staff transitions: Continued recruiting efforts.

• Developed the leadership competencies to build and strengthen the leadership pipeline and capacity.

Spaces

• In planning for a new Sumner Library, Library System administrators restarted discussions for funding a new library in Sumner. The current Sumner Library needs to move because its current location, which the City of Sumner owns, requires costly repairs, is undersized for the population it serves and does not meet current needs, and it is difficult to access.

Lakewood Pierce County Library:

• Closure: The Library System closed the Lakewood Library in June due to its critical, unsafe condition, and significant maintenance and repair needs.

• Current Lakewood Library Services: The Library continued to serve the Lakewood community with pop-up libraries and events with community partners throughout the city.

• Interim Lakewood Library: The Library System is moving forward to provide a new, modern library facility in an accessible area for residents to use until a long-term library is built.

• Long-term Lakewood Library: The Library’s Board of Trustees reviewed recommendations from the Lakewood Libraries Building Community Advisory Committee to determine next steps for long-term library service in Lakewood and it is working with Library administrators to make decisions.
Building Improvements

- Improved technology and the interior space of the Bonney Lake Pierce County Library to better serve the growing and changing community.
- Removed trees due to potential safety hazards, and resurfaced/restriped the parking lots at the Gig Harbor and South Hill Pierce County Libraries.

Technology

- Updated interior Wi-Fi equipment at locations for better connectivity.
- Replaced core networking switches, routers and storage that support the Library’s network and data infrastructure.

Partnerships

- All library locations partnered with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to distribute free COVID-19 test kits and offered free COVID-19 vaccines at some locations.
- Voter Point of Assistance: The Pierce County Elections’ ballot box at the South Hill Library received the highest amount of ballots in the county during the November General Election with 14,792 ballots.
- TacomaProbono awarded the Library System its Community Partner of the Year Award for partnering with the nonprofit legal aid organization and Pierce County Human Services to provide drop-in clinics at libraries to help people with housing.

Classes and Events

- Library staff resumed offering classes and events for all ages, virtually and in-person outdoors and indoors.
- Reopened study rooms and meeting rooms to the public.

Business Processes

- The Library System adhered to COVID-19 protocol as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington State Department of Health, and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.
Your Investment in The Pierce County Library

Total 2022 Revenues: $43,194,100
Total 2022 Expenditures: $41,639,100

Overview of the Pierce County Library System

- Established in 1946.
- Includes unincorporated Pierce County and 15 annexed cities and towns.
- Serves approximately 634,000 people through 19 libraries and online services.
- Operates as an independent taxing district and reports to a volunteer Board of Trustees.
Fast Facts 2022

- **1,969,666** Visits
- **1,020,926** To 19 Libraries
- **929,934** Website
- **18,806** Curbside

- **4,821,855** Books/Materials Checked Out
- **2,694,243** From Shelves
- **2,127,612** From online e-books & Audio books

- **301,702** Uses of online databases/e-sources
- **29,265** Event attendance online and outdoors

- **284,845** Cardholders
  - It is the card to have!
• The Pierce County Library Foundation’s fourth annual Trivia BEE was a success. Library supporters attended the in-person trivia event and raised more than $45,000 for outreach services.

• The 17 Friends of the Library groups restarted activities and reopened donations late in 2022 in preparation for book sales in 2023.

Thank you to the Foundation and Friends for 2022 Contributions
2022 Donors

The Pierce County Library Foundation thanks the following individual and corporate donors for their generous support through December 31, 2022. For information on how you can make a gift in support of your Pierce County Library, please contact the Foundation office at 253-548-3541.

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Endowed funds take a long view of the future, and can transform a community from one of dependency to one of ascendancy. Individuals who contribute to these funds are making a valuable commitment to the Pierce County Library and their community for generations to come. Please contact the Pierce County Library Foundation for more information.

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