



ENOCH PRATT *free* LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2026

**Our mission is to empower, enrich, and enhance
the quality of life for all through equitable access
to information, services, and opportunity.**

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Letter from the CEO

Our intention with FY26's annual report is to provide a deeper look into the story we are writing every day here at the Pratt Library. From renovations and a new building to immense and immersive exhibits to programs and events made for every individual, this year has felt like an absolute whirlwind, in the best way possible.

That said, one of my main goals here at Pratt is to celebrate the history, culture, and people of Baltimore. Prime examples of our work to that end are the House of Melo exhibit and the DeWayne Wickham Room. These projects showcase two legendary Baltimoreans, Carmelo Anthony and DeWayne Wickham, in basketball and journalism, respectively, that have made lasting impacts worldwide.

Going even further, our exhibit on Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, the Baltimore-born poet and activist, shines a light on a true hero of Baltimore and Black History.

These projects are just the beginning. In the coming year, we plan to celebrate many more Black leaders in our next major exhibit and initiative, "Black Political Leaders in Maryland: A Legacy."

Year in and year out, our talented staff and partners work to serve the residents of Baltimore through engaging programming such as Writers LIVE!, Summer Break Baltimore, Read to Reef, as well as life-changing work in our community, like our Peer Navigator, Social Worker in the Library, and Pratt Free Market initiatives.

The Pratt has endeavored to and successfully recruited several excellent division and department heads to our leadership team this past year. I am incredibly proud of these new leaders that I work closely with, day to day and week to week, throughout the year. Representing talent from diverse fields such as academia, local government, and of course, public libraries, they inspire me every day as they step up and make strategic and impactful contributions to the work of the Library.

Of course, I would also like to acknowledge all the dedicated Pratt staff, community members, board members, and customers that make the Pratt the absolute marvel that it is. We hope you enjoy this annual report and learn a little bit more about what we do and why we do it. See you at the Library.

Chad Helton
President and CEO, Enoch Pratt Free Library



D. Watkins, Chad Helton, Carmelo Anthony, and Khalilah Beavers at the House of Melo exhibit.

New Leadership

This fiscal year, the Pratt welcomed many new members to the leadership team. Several members were promoted from within the organization, and other members joined us from a variety of backgrounds. The expertise this team brings will help shape the Library's future.



Emil L. Cunningham, PhD
*Executive Director, Office of
Equity and Fair Practice*



Nestor Diaz
*Director of Marketing &
Communications*



Mia Lemke
Chief People Officer



Carly Reighard
*Executive Director of Education
& Library Services*



Liz Sundermann-Zinger
*Executive Director of External
Affairs & the Central Library*



Erik Thompson
Chief Operating Officer



Letter from the Board Chair

As we reflect on this past year, I am reminded that the Pratt's greatest strength is not simply its remarkable collections or innovative programs — it is the people who bring our mission to life every day. Let the accomplishments of the dedicated team at the Pratt, showcased in this annual report, serve as a retrospective glimpse into that mission.

Across our branches and in every neighborhood we serve, Pratt staff create opportunities for learning, connection, and discovery. Whether introducing someone to the joy of reading, helping a job seeker prepare for a new career, supporting a small business owner, or simply being a welcoming place for our neighbors, the Library — through the individuals who help steward it — has a lasting impact on the daily lives of Baltimoreans.

Baltimore's needs continue to evolve, and with them, the role of trusted public institutions becomes even more important. This year has demonstrated the Pratt's ability to meet those changing needs by expanding services, strengthening community partnerships, and remaining steadfast in our commitment to serving the people of Baltimore.

As we look to the future, I am excited about the opportunities ahead for the Enoch Pratt Free Library. By continuing to strengthen partnerships with city agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, philanthropic and political leaders, and residents alike, we will ensure that the Library has the support it needs to expand its reach. My fellow trustees and directors and I are committed to helping the Library achieve its strategic goals, foster relationships across our city, and ensure that Pratt continues to grow as a cornerstone of opportunity, learning, and connection for generations to come.

It is an honor to serve in support of this extraordinary institution. And I look forward to all we will accomplish together in the coming year.

Jamar R. Brown
Chair, Boards of Trustees and Directors

Library Boards of Trustees and Directors T = Trustee D = Director

Jamar R. Brown (T/D)
Chair, Board of Trustees & Board of Directors

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Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

Mark Caplan (T/D)
First Vice Chair, Board of Directors

Neal Naff (T/D)
Second Vice Chair, Board of Directors

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Treasurer, Board of Directors

OluwaTosin Adegbola (D)
Secretary, Board of Trustees & Board of Directors

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Vernon A. Reid (T)
Benjamin Rosenberg (T)
Jeffrey H. Scherr (D)
Beulah Sabundayo (D)
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Dr. Carla D. Hayden Award

In 2025, the Enoch Pratt Free Library established the Carla D. Hayden Award for Distinguished Service to recognize individuals and organizations whose work advances the ideals that have defined Dr. Hayden's extraordinary career. Guided by the Library's mission of equity, access, and opportunity for all, the award, bestowed by the Library's Boards of Trustees and Directors, honors those whose leadership reflects a commitment to public service, and an understanding of the role libraries play in strengthening communities.

The inaugural award was fittingly presented to Dr. Carla D. Hayden in recognition of her career spanning more than five decades and her immeasurable contributions to not only the Enoch Pratt Free Library and communities across the nation, but the library profession as a whole. As President and CEO of Pratt and later as the 14th Librarian of Congress, Dr. Hayden has been a steadfast champion for equitable access to information, lifelong learning, and the belief that libraries are cornerstones of democracy.

By naming the award in her honor, the Pratt celebrates a legacy of visionary leadership and public service while inspiring future recipients to carry forward the leadership and values of Dr. Hayden.





BUILDING PROJECT



Building Projects

Johnston Square

The Johnston Square Branch officially opened on November 10, 2025, and is the first new Pratt location to open in more than 15 years.

Co-located within “The Hammond” apartment building, the Library is one part of a cornerstone in the ongoing community-driven transformation of the larger Johnston Square community. With 109 affordable mixed-income apartments and a brand-new, world-class public library location, the building is an innovative model for pairing new high-quality, transit-oriented housing with a street-level hub of interactive public spaces for the entire community.

The grand opening celebration of the Johnston Square Branch and “The Hammond” apartment building at Greenmount Park included remarks and a ribbon cutting with state and local dignitaries and community members. Attendees included Mayor Brandon Scott, Senator Chris Van Hollen, Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman, Maryland Housing Secretary Jake Day, Maryland Senator Cory McCray, Pratt President and CEO Chad Helton, and Founder and Executive Director of Rebuild Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization Regina Hammond. Following the ribbon cutting, visitors enjoyed tours of the building and a full day of activities including a community bench art project with Empact Art, hula hooping with Baltimore Hoop Love, henna with Cardamom & Clove Henna, button making, and a scavenger hunt. The Hammond at Greenmount Park was spearheaded by a redevelopment partnership comprised of Somerset Development Company, New Community Partners, and ReBUILD Metro. This project would not have been possible without the ongoing support from the above-mentioned community stakeholders as well as Council President Zeke Cohen, Councilman Jermaine Jones, and the Pratt’s Boards of Trustees and Directors.

Building Projects

Brooklyn

The Brooklyn Branch reopened on January 12, 2026 following an interior refresh. Thanks to American Rescue Plan funding through the Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs, the branch received a new HVAC system as well as new paint, carpet, and furniture.

Following remarks and a ribbon cutting including Mayor Brandon Scott; Councilwoman Phylicia Porter; Enoch Pratt Free Library President and CEO Chad Helton; Chief of Capital Projects Division of General Services Marwan al Karajat; and Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery Elizabeth Tatum, members of the Brooklyn community and Pratt Library staff celebrated the occasion with a live jazz performance, airbrush tattoos, a DJ workshop, and other activities throughout the day.

Since reopening, the Brooklyn Branch has welcomed more than 22,000 visitors. In addition to the branch's collections and computers, customers enjoy access to a wide array of services, including:

- A community pantry and refrigerator, with non-perishable goods from the Maryland Food Bank and fresh produce from Moon Valley Farms
- Peer Navigator social impact service
- Engaging programming for all ages, including job & career assistance, arts & crafts, STEAM activities, storytimes, and live music

Park Heights

One of the key recommendations included in the Pratt's 10-year facility master plan, published in 2022, was the development of a new anchor branch located in northwest Baltimore. After partnering with the city's Department of Recreation & Parks, the project is coming to fruition and broke ground on August 27, 2025.

The joint project is envisioned to be a new template and one that helps both the City of Baltimore and the Pratt expand on existing advances in efficiency and resource stewardship. The new library building is planned to have a dedicated children's reading room, multi-purpose assembly space, a variety of lounge and study areas, abundant natural light, public access computer spaces, and WiFi. This accessible and modern building will meet the community's needs long into the future. The project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2027.

DeWayne Wickham Room

The Enoch Pratt Free Library is proud to host the DeWayne Wickham Collection, which reflects his career as a journalist, author, educator, and public figure. The collection includes manuscripts, research files, interviews, working drafts, correspondence, ephemera, pamphlets, and images from throughout his illustrious career. On November 12, 2025, the Pratt opened the DeWayne Wickham Room in the Central Library to showcase the collection, which has open hours twice a week and is also available by appointment.

Mr. Wickham's collection came to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in the 2010s through a collaboration with the African American Department and Special Collections Department. The Wickham Collection further connects Mr. Wickham's journalistic legacy to his hometown of Baltimore, and it provides researchers with an invaluable resource of materials related to journalism in Maryland and African American journalism studies. The Special Collections Department continues to receive materials from Mr. Wickham, and this collection continues to grow.





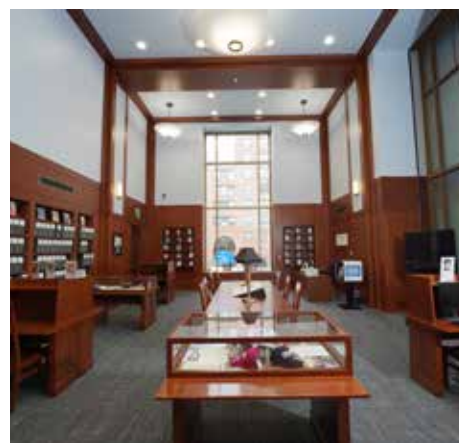
Opposite page: Children's area at the Brooklyn Branch.

Top row: Rendering of the Park Heights Branch. Ribbon cutting at the Brooklyn Branch.

Second row: Groundbreaking for the new Park Heights Branch.

Third row: DeWayne Wickham stands with a *USA Today* newspaper box. DeWayne Wickham Room. Deputy Director Vivian Fisher and 14th Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla D. Hayden.

Bottom row: Customers explore the newly opened Wickham Room.





EXHIBIT



Exhibits

The Pratt is home to free and engaging exhibits and special displays that highlight important historical and cultural information. Exhibits are researched, curated, and designed by Library staff who work together to create visually compelling and informative installations. While some exhibits are only shown at the Central Library, others are created to rotate among the Pratt's branches and travel to libraries around the state.

From October 25, 2025 to January 16, 2026, the Pratt was home to "House of Melo: Where Tomorrows Are Promised," a landmark cultural exhibit honoring Baltimore native Carmelo Anthony on the occasion of his 2025 induction into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. This ambitious exhibit spanned the Central Library and featured memorabilia from Anthony's career, workshops throughout the Pratt system, and a special-edition library card.

Also on display this year were exhibits featuring Indigenous artwork from the Library's Special Collections Department; work by local artists and acclaimed photographers; informative displays on unsung abolitionist and LGBTQ+ activists; and the culmination of the 2025 – 2026 Hackerman Artist in Residence Program.

"I want people to feel inspired to dream big and know it's possible. You can't tell that story without Baltimore. This city raised me, challenged me and gave me the drive to grow. Now, I hope my journey can be a blueprint for others chasing theirs."

— Carmelo Anthony



Exhibits

House of Melo

In October of 2025, the Pratt Library unveiled one of the most ambitious exhibits in its storied history. In collaboration with NBA legend Carmelo Anthony and his incredible team of creatives, Central Library became House of Melo HQ. Curated by award-winning writer D. Watkins and creative director Khalilah Beavers, the exhibition offered rare artifacts, personal collections, and cultural mementos that highlighted Anthony's impact on sports, style, business, and social justice. Special limited-edition library cards were created for the exhibit and available exclusively at House of Melo HQ.

As part of the House of Melo initiative, the program series, House of Melo Community Empowerment Symposium, reflected both Anthony's legacy and the Library's mission: to make culture, history, and opportunity accessible to everyone. Events included "No Such Thing as Writer's Block: A Storytelling & Writing Session with Wallace Lane" and "The Hypervisible Self: Guidance for Public Life & Private Balance with Alanah Nicole Davis."

The series continued through the fall of 2026. Led by local leaders and Carmelo Anthony's longtime collaborators, this symposium invited creatives, entrepreneurs, artists, and innovators to inspire the next generation to follow their passions and pursue excellence in their chosen paths. Through interactive workshops, storytelling, and hands-on experiences, participants gained practical tools, creative insight, financial knowledge, and wellness strategies — all while being empowered to dream big and see themselves as future creators, leaders, and icons.





Steve Parke

In May 2026, the Pratt Library hosted Steve Parke — the award-winning photographer and art director of music icon Prince — in celebration of his newly published collection of exclusive photographs of the legend himself.

Parke's collection, *Prince: Black, White, Color*, reveals the artist as he's never been seen before thanks to a unique and exclusive set of photographs, many published in the collection for the first time.

Ahead of his Writers LIVE! event, the Pratt created an unforgettable exhibit at the Central Library in the Best & Next Department that included dozens of large prints displayed atop the bookcases, a massive portrait of Prince himself overlooking Central Hall, and a large-scale recreation of Prince's Graffiti Bridge.



Fierce Warrior: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

September 24, 2025 marked the 200th birthday of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, an unsung hero and one of Baltimore's most accomplished activists and artists. Harper's work focused on the areas of abolition, temperance, equal rights, economic independence, civil rights, and women's rights.

As a poet, educator, author, lecturer, and club woman, Harper was a household name. Not only was she the first African American woman to publish a short story, but she was also an influential abolitionist, suffragist, political activist, and reformer. She sustained a long and prolific publishing career at a time when it was rare for women — particularly women of color — to have a voice. As a result, she is referred to as "the mother of African American journalism" and "the Bronze Muse."

This exhibit honored Harper's life and fierce advocacy for equal rights and justice during the 19th and early 20th centuries. A traveling version of the exhibit was also created for display across the state of Maryland.



Other Exhibits

STORIES WITHOUT WORDS: NATIVE AMERICAN ART IN PRINTS

The Pratt celebrated Native American Heritage with a gallery-style exhibit curated by the Special Collections Department. It consisted of original prints from some of the C. Szwedzicki portfolios. Between 1929 and 1952, this small publisher in Nice, France, produced six portfolios of North American Indian art.

PORTALS TO OTHER WORLDS

Annie Howe, the Pratt's most recent Hackerman Artist in Residence, transformed the second-floor hallway of the Central Library with her distinctive papercuts. Her exhibit was titled "Portals to Other Worlds" and was based on her site-specific research at the Library.

PIONEERS

The Pratt created "Pioneers," a traveling exhibit titled to celebrate multiple little-known histories within Baltimore's LGBTQIA+ history. After its run at the Central Library, the exhibit will be available to libraries across Maryland.

Opposite Top: Carmelo Anthony with a group of students.

Opposite right column: House of Melo memorabilia display. House of Melo locker room display. House of Melo display in Central Hall.

This page left: Exhibit featuring Steve Parke's photographs of Prince on display in the Central Library.

Right: Sign for the "Fierce Warrior" exhibit in Central Hall. A customer walks by part of the exhibit on Frances Ellen Watkins Harper on display in the Annex.



Top row: Special Collections Mini-Conference attendees participate in a journal-making workshop. A panelist speaks during the Special Collections Mini Conference.

Second row: Reentry Conference attendees chat during breakfast. A State Library Resource Center conference attendee listens during a presentation. A State Library Resource Center conference attendee participates in a workshop.

Third row: Reentry Conference speakers. Women in Workforce honorees.

Bottom row: Office of Equity and Fair Practice staff at the Reentry Conference.

Conferences

Special Collections

Mini Conference

At the request of several public library directors, the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) conference team organized a mini conference in May 2026 for 33 library workers and administrators that focused on special collections. SLRC staff led workshops about digitization, the African American funeral programs collection, copyright and fair use topics, and provided a tour of several of the Central Library's public departments as well as the Bindery, Memory Lab, and Digital Maryland. There was also plenty of time for networking and information sharing. The intimate format and narrow topic led to more in-depth learning than SLRC's more general conferences.

Women in Workforce

The Women in Workforce Luncheon is an informative and engaging annual gathering. Each year during Women's History Month, the Pratt honors five to eight spectacular women in the community who are professionals in Human Resources, Human Services, and Workforce Development. A full day of celebration includes conversation, networking, and delicious food. The program features micro-learning sessions on topics such as improving systems, new methodologies, and enhancing a stronger connection between companies and a qualified workforce, all while honoring local women whose impactful work has been dedicated to supporting the community.

Reentry Conference

In June 2026, the Library's Office of Equity and Fair Practice hosted its 3rd Reentry Redefined Conference, a two-day hybrid event dedicated to strengthening reentry systems and improving outcomes for justice-impacted individuals. Centered on the theme "Make Some N.O.I.S.E." (Navigate, Organize, Impact, Support, Empower), the conference convened 240 participants, including returning citizens, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, behavioral health professionals, workforce partners, educators, legal advocates, and community leaders.

Day one featured keynote presentations, interactive workshops, and networking opportunities focused on behavioral health, economic mobility, juvenile justice, workforce development, housing, and trauma-informed practices. Day two expanded the conference's reach through a virtual experience that elevated lived experiences, fostered policy dialogue, and encouraged collaborative solutions.

With support from Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Pratt Library continues to strengthen cross-sectional partnerships, elevate the voices of justice-impacted individuals, and advance innovative, person-centered approaches to reentry, thus fulfilling the Library's mission to empower, enrich, and enhance the quality of life for all through equitable access to information, services, and opportunity.





Collection Highlights

Digital Maryland

Digital Maryland is the statewide digitization program of the Maryland State Library Resource Center and the Enoch Pratt Free Library. In FY26, 16 new collections and more than 20,000 items were added. The site also had more than 1.5 million pageviews. New content included historic newspapers, the *Jewish Comment*, National Road photographs, and the Herbert H. Jones Family Collection, preserving the legacy of the nation's first Black-owned and operated airport.



Top row: Zoo keeper Earl Eney with sea lion, circa 1960s. Part of the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore Collection.

Marble Bar schedule flyer, December 31, 1981 – January 29, 1982. Part of the Maryland Punk Archive and the Marble Bar Memorabilia Collection.

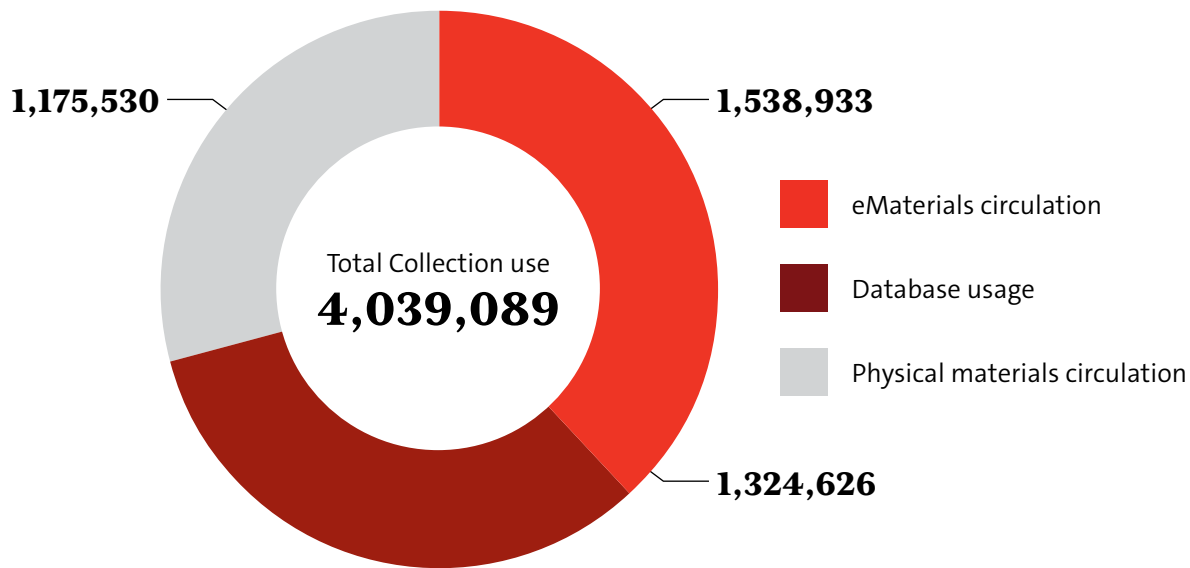
Interview with Saul Serpas. Part of the Voices of Maryland Collection from the Maryland State Archives.

Bottom: Cover of *Jewish Comment* Vol. XV, No. 7, May 30, 1902. Part of the Baltimore Jewish Comment Newspaper Collection.

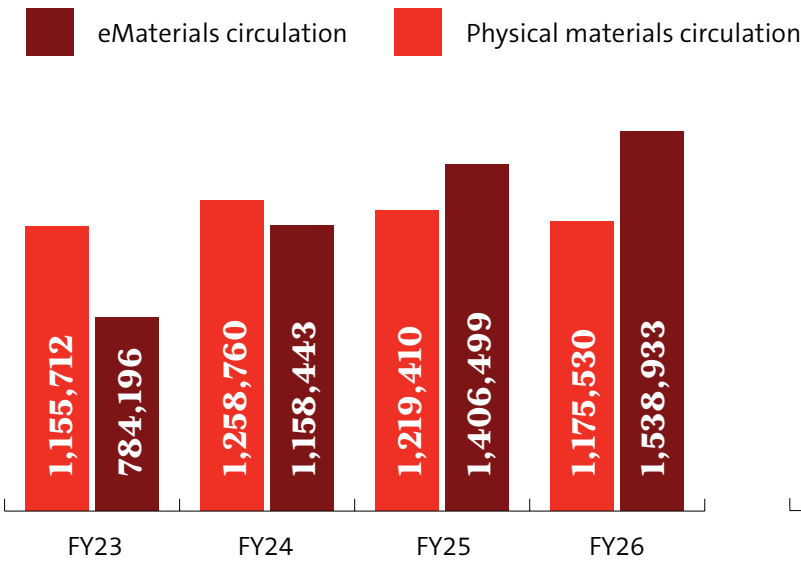
Military men checking an airplane's tail, 1946. Part of the Herbert H. Jones Jr. Columbia Air Center Collection.

Collection Highlights

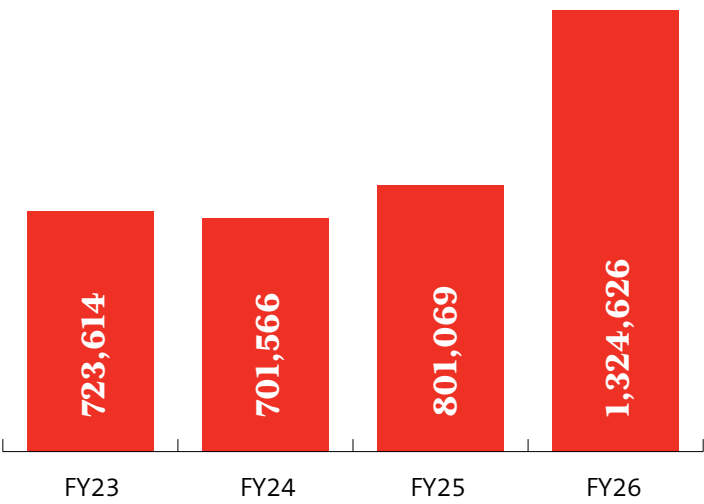
Collection Use



Number of Materials Circulated

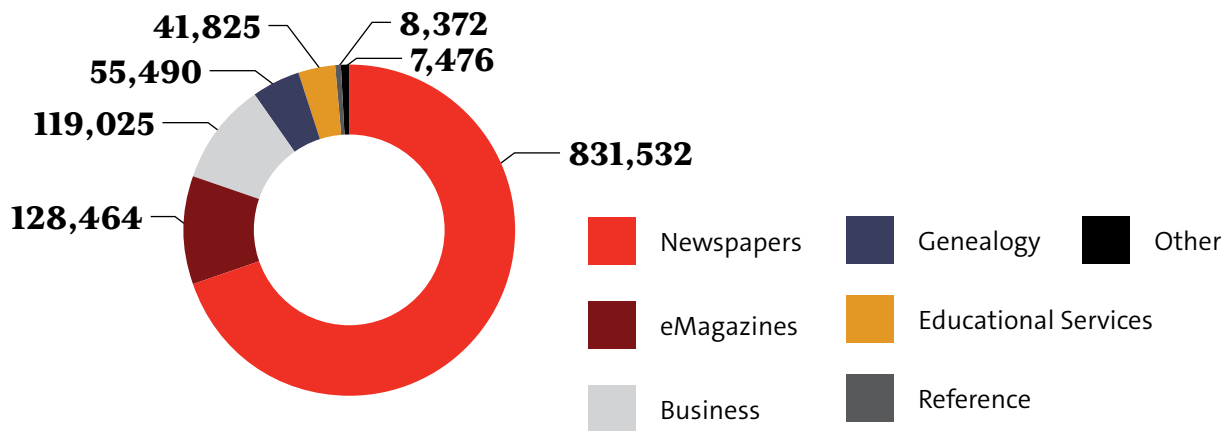


Database Usage

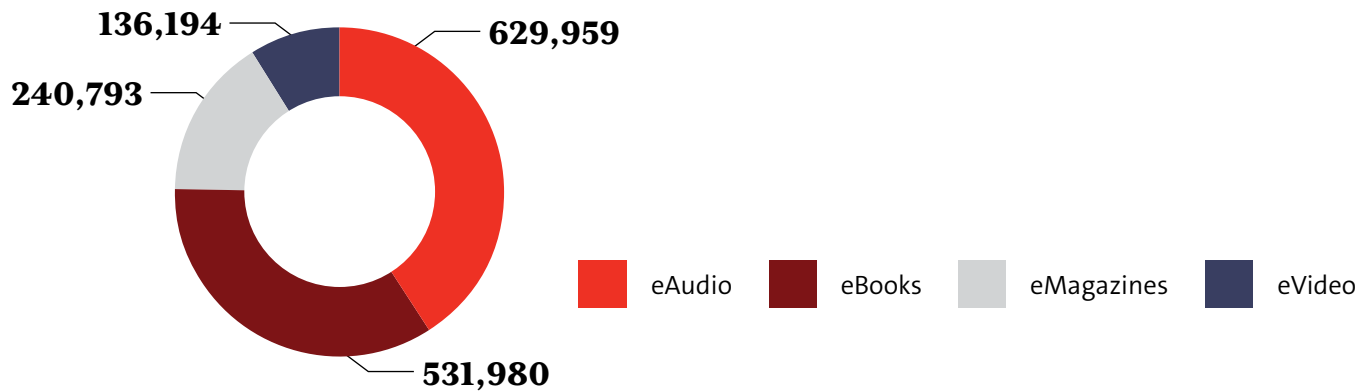


Total circulation continues to climb, while eMaterials continued to surpass physical materials in circulation. Database usage jumped significantly with the addition of several newspapers including the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

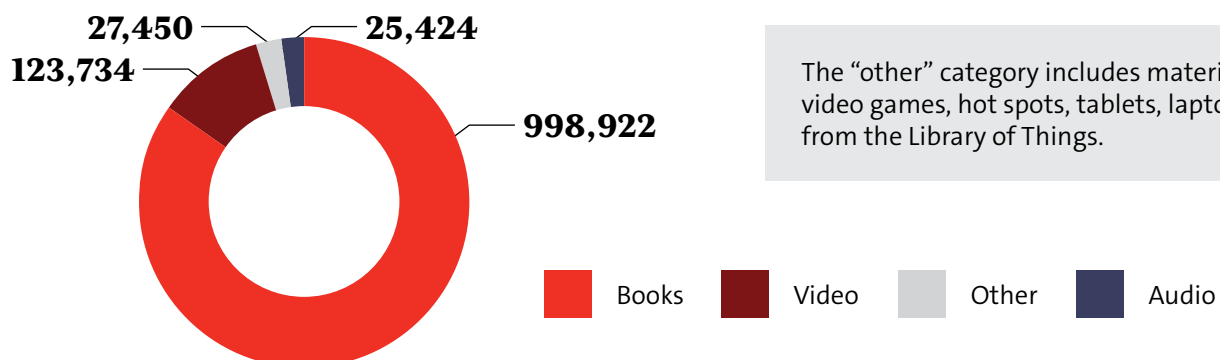
Database Category Breakdown



eMaterials Breakdown

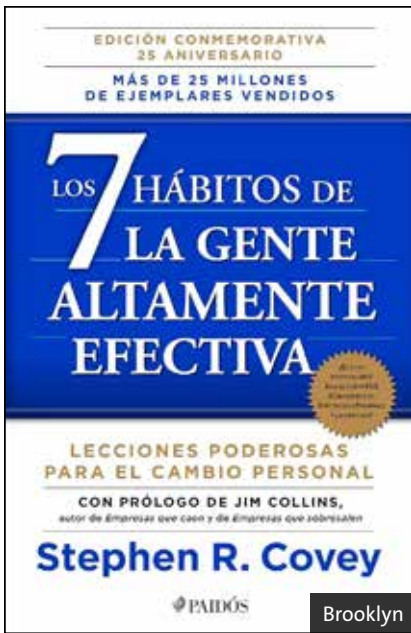


Physical Material Breakdown

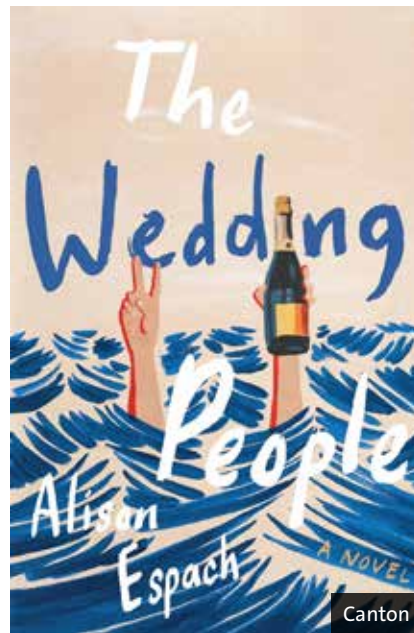


The “other” category includes materials such as video games, hot spots, tablets, laptops, and items from the Library of Things.

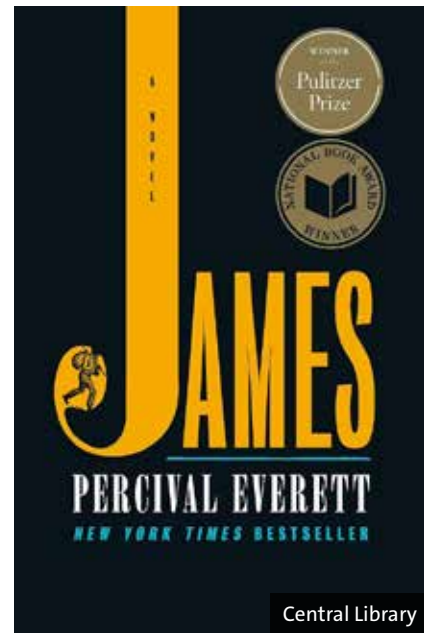
THE TOP CIRCULATING BOOK AT EACH PRATT LIBRARY BRANCH



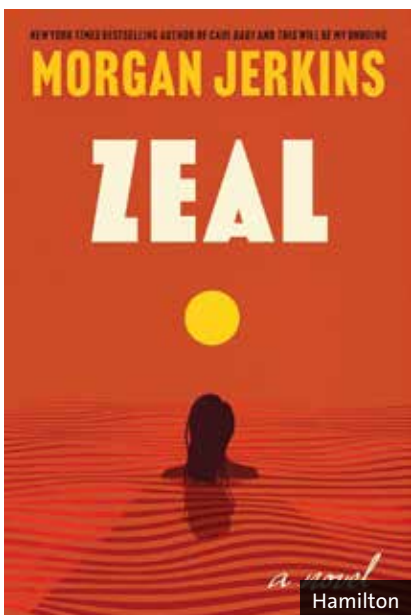
Brooklyn



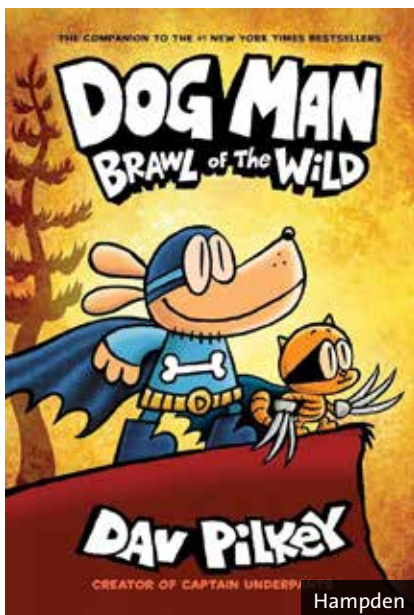
Canton



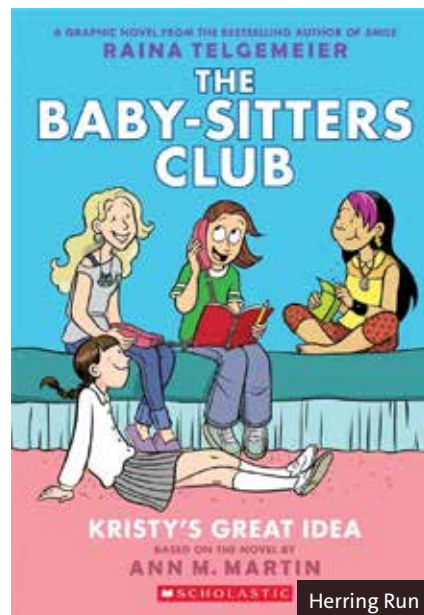
Central Library



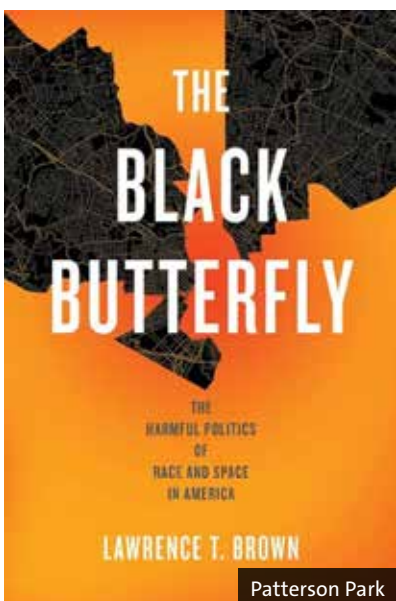
Hamilton



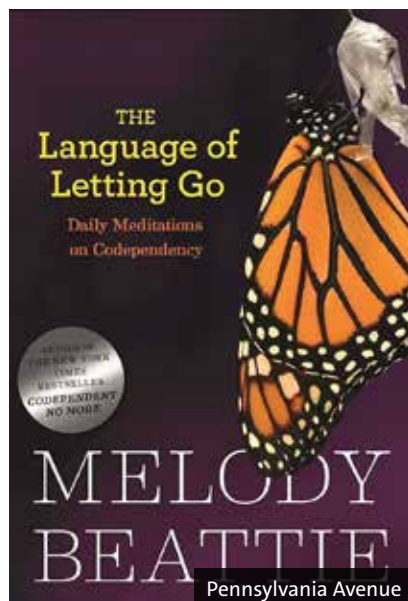
Hampden



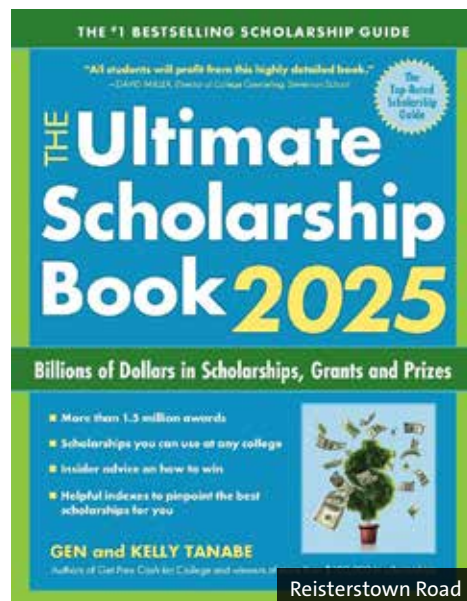
Herring Run



Patterson Park



Pennsylvania Avenue

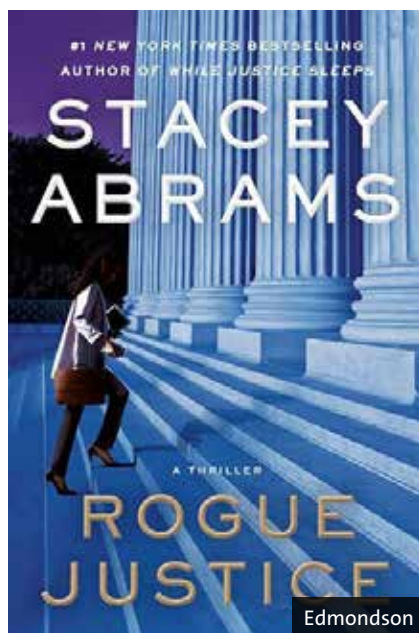


Reisterstown Road

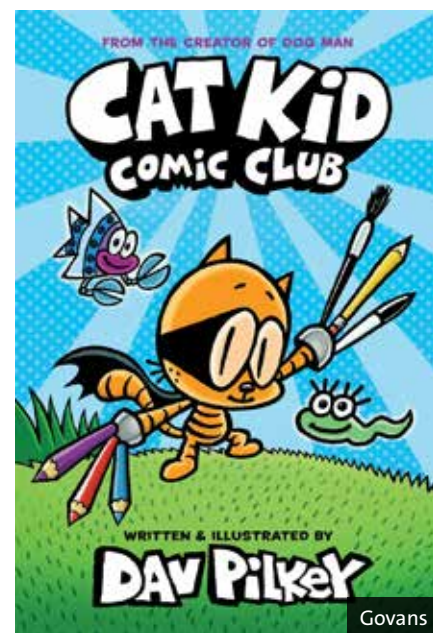




Cherry Hill



Edmondson



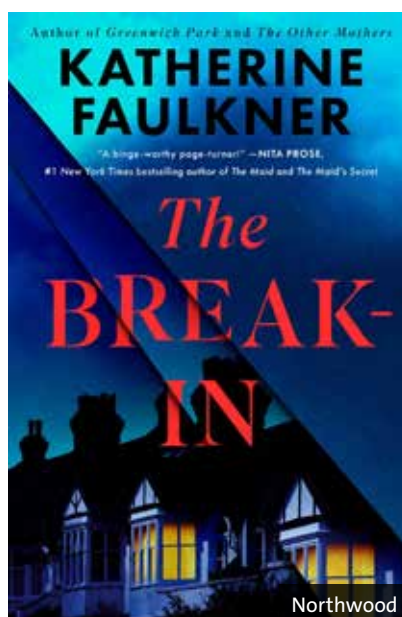
Govans



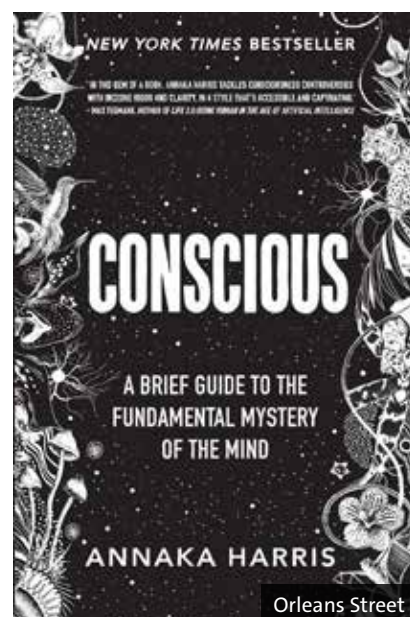
Johnston Square



Light Street



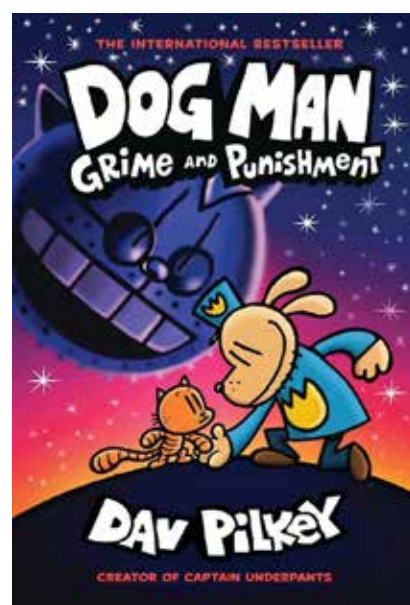
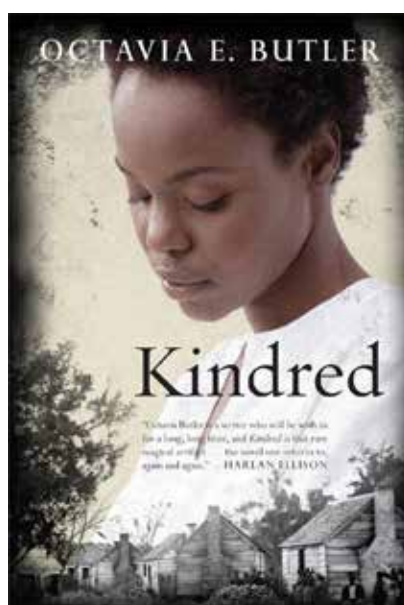
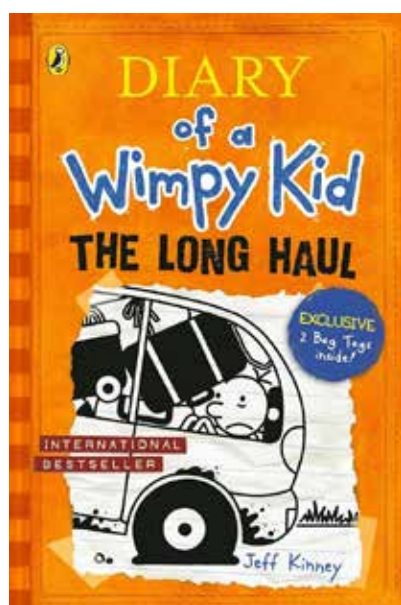
Northwood



Orleans Street



Roland Park





PROGRAM



Programs

There is something for everyone at the Pratt and countless ways to learn, create, and connect!

In FY26, 115,966 people participated in public programs. Children and families gathered for storytimes, STEAM activities, and hands-on learning experiences, as well as programs ranging from animal ambassador meet and greets and puppet shows to opera performances and DJ workshops. Teens and adults found something to spark their interests and build their skills, from anime clubs and college and career workshops to live music and health and wellness workshops.

Signature initiatives gave Baltimoreans even more opportunities to come together: Writers LIVE! connected audiences with acclaimed authors and luminaries; Summer Break Baltimore invited families to read and learn together while building their home library; Indie Video Game Fest connected audiences to local independent game developers; and Imagination Celebration and the Spring Into Stories Family Festival connected families with dozens of community partners that support of early literacy and kindergarten readiness.

The Pratt also helped Baltimoreans navigate an increasingly digital world. Through computer and digital literacy programming led by staff and the Pratt Center for Technology Training, library users gained practical computer skills and greater confidence using technology, supporting access to education, employment, and essential services.

And for many Baltimoreans, the Pratt was an access point to something even more fundamental: support when they needed it most. Through the Library's social impact programs, the Pratt connected library users with staff and community service providers who could help address challenges related to health, housing, legal needs, employment, recovery, food security, and more.

Through library programming, the Pratt creates opportunities for Baltimoreans to discover new ideas, build skills, pursue their passions, and connect with their community, and each program helps strengthen the Library's role as a place of possibility, belonging, and growth.



Writers LIVE!

9,425

books given away in FY26

10,831

attendees to author programs

159

author programs

The Pratt Library has established itself as a desired destination for authors to promote their books. The many authors we hosted this year included two Man Booker Prize winners, Ian McEwan and George Saunders; James Beard Award-Winning chef, Tom Colicchio; two-time Emmy Award-winning chef, Kardea Brown; multiple Emmy Award-winning news anchor and correspondent, Norah O'Donnell; and acclaimed Princeton University professor, Eddie Glaude, to name just a few.

Additionally, almost every week during the school year, our children and young adult author program team managed and coordinated author visits in our branches and at different Baltimore City Public Schools. During each visit, students met and learned from the writers, who come from diverse backgrounds, and received a free signed copy of the book. These programs have continued to strengthen the partnership between Baltimore City Public Schools and the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Left: Mychal Threats presenting to an auditorium of students about his book *I'm So Happy You're Here: A Celebration of Library Joy*. Writers LIVE! with Tom Colicchio.

Center: Pratt Society Reception with Kardea Brown. Writers LIVE! with George Saunders.

Right: Writers LIVE! with Norah O'Donnell.

Opposite left: The Teen Library Board and supporting staff after speaking with the Pratt Library Board. Teen Library Board members speak with the Pratt Library Board.

Opposite center: Presenters during World Mental Health Day Teen Talk Summit.

Opposite left: Indie Game Fest attendees play a demo. Indie Game Fest keynote featuring game dev Emma Kidwell and video essayist Jacob Geller.



Teen Programs

Teen Library Board

The Pratt Library's inaugural Teen Library Board met for the first time in October 2025. The board was comprised of 11 teen members who met several times a month through June 2026. In addition to learning about libraries and leadership, they were responsible for brainstorming, planning, and running a teen-focused program of their own. They selected a casual movie screening of *Jumanji 2* with food and activities. This program created a low-stress opportunity for teens to feel welcome and hang out at the library. Their program was a great success with 32 attendees.

The Teen Library Board also spoke about their experiences as teen library users to the Library's Boards of Trustees and Directors during their March and June meetings.

Teen Library Board members regularly stated they can't wait for next year. Some members said, "it was their favorite place to be this year," and that being part of the board, "felt like a comforting hug after a long day."

Teen Mental Health Day

On October 10, 2025, the Central Library hosted its first annual World Mental Health Day Teen Talk Summit. The Library brought in over 300 students from Baltimore City schools. The students listened to speakers discuss their struggles with mental health, were presented with solutions and coping mechanisms from peer representatives, and also ate a delicious lunch. The featured author and integral organizer of the event was Kevin Shird. Shird generously provided a signed copy of his book, *A Life for a Life*, which discusses how ignoring mental health can have long-term effects on a person's life. Notable guest speakers for the event included First Lady Dawn Moore, City Council President Zeke Cohen, and Rashad Stanton (Community Law in Action). The Library partnered with community organizations such as National Alliance on Mental Illness and Community Law in Action.

Indie Video Game Fest

The Central Library welcomed more than 40 local video game developers for the third annual Indie Video Game Fest. Over 700 attendees participated, creating an exciting mix of developers, people playing games, and folks learning about careers in the games industry.

The Library held three talks focused on the process of making games, culminating with a main talk between game dev Emma Kidwell and video essayist Jacob Geller.

This annual event is a great resource for informal networking for Baltimore game developers, and it is also an excellent opportunity to meet people and learn about the career paths available for those debating working in the industry.

Children's Programs

10 years of Read to Reef Book Club

For the past 10 years, Read to Reef Book Club has inspired children across Baltimore to discover the joy of reading while celebrating the wonders of the natural world. Through this long-standing partnership with the National Aquarium, young readers have been encouraged to build strong literacy habits by tracking their reading and earning the opportunity to visit the National Aquarium, reinforcing the connection between learning, curiosity, and exploration. Over the past decade, thousands of children and families have participated, creating lasting memories while strengthening a love of books that extends beyond the summer months. As Read to Reef marks this milestone anniversary, the program continues to demonstrate how community partnerships can expand access to literacy experiences and encourage lifelong learning for readers of all ages.

Battle of the Books

Battle of the Books continued to inspire Baltimore City students through teamwork, friendly competition, and a shared love of reading. In partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools and Morgan State University, the Enoch Pratt Free Library supported fourth- and fifth-grade readers from more than 30 schools. After months of reading from a curated book list, students competed in an exciting trivia-style tournament that showcased literary knowledge, collaboration, and school pride. Thomas Johnson Elementary/Middle School earned this year's championship title. More than a competition, Battle of the Books builds confidence, strengthens literacy skills, and celebrates the joy of reading together.



This page: Battle of the Books participants.

Opposite page top row: Artist in Residence Annie Howe speaking in front of her papercut panorama. Writer in Residence Taylor Johnson and Artist in Residence Annie Howe speak at the Hackerman Residencies closing reception.

Opposite page bottom row: Customers admire Annie Howe's final installation. Taylor Johnson speaks at a writing workshop. Annie Howe at work in her studio.



Hackerman Residencies

The 2025 – 2026 Hackerman Artist and Writer in Residence Programs were a resounding success. This year, committees from the Pratt and the community selected Annie Howe to be the Artist in Residence and Taylor Johnson to be the Writer in Residence. Howe and Johnson held numerous programs and workshops at the Central Library and around the city.

One writing workshop participant stated, “Taylor has been a profound gardener of Baltimore’s poetry community as the Hackerman Writer in Residence. His organizing and facilitation in the role has helped me foster earnest and authentic relationships with other writers in the area, and his feedback has been invaluable in both honing specific poems and building my writing practice more generally. I feel deeply fortunate for the residency, and after only a few months of knowing about it as a resource, I’ve tangibly benefited.”

Taylor’s work culminated in a live reading from some of the customers he mentored throughout the year, while Howe transformed the 2nd Floor of the Central Library into a papercut panorama.

Digital Maryland plans to create a new collection featuring Enoch Pratt Free Library Artists in Residence, with Howe serving as our inaugural artist. The Maryland Department also plans to create an archive featuring work from the Artist in Residence.

21,117
registrants

60,823
BINGO activities completed

28,753
books read

21,257
books given away

96
raffle prizes awarded

1,166
programs offered

16,791
program attendees

Summer Break Baltimore

In Summer 2026, we invited Summer Break Baltimore participants to join us in completing fun and educational activities with the help of this year's mascot, Chessie, the Chesapeake Bay sea monster. Chessie's Big Bash events were held at five locations to celebrate the midpoint of the program with our community members.

In addition to providing a free book at signup and completion prizes to motivate participants, the program encouraged exploration of the city and participation in meaningful experiences. The Pratt's goal in shifting Summer Break Baltimore to a BINGO-based activity board to keep readers engaged during the summer succeeded in guiding readers to explore new genres and formats, learn words in new languages, and even build cozy reading nooks with their little ones. All completers were entered into our prize drawings, which included items like an annual membership to the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore.

Even during a transitional year with many program changes, the Library is thrilled that more than 21,000 readers participated in Summer Break Baltimore 2026. The program remains open to all customers as the Pratt Library values promoting literacy at any age. Summer Break Baltimore remains a key opportunity to reach out to our community, underscore the Pratt Library as a welcoming space, and spark a love of reading.

“It led my kids to learn a language this summer. It motivated them to do positive activities that they wouldn’t ordinarily do.”

— Summer Break Baltimore Participant





Opposite: Pratt staff enjoy The Charmery's Summer Break Baltimore flavor, Chessie's Sea Monster Swirl.

This page: Summer Break Baltimore participants with their book picks and T-shirts.



“[I liked the] push to try new types of reading. I finished my first audiobook!”

— Summer Break Baltimore Participant



SOCIAL PROGRAM





Social Impact Programs

Through the Library's social impact programming, community members can receive free assistance and advice from lawyers, social workers, nurses, addiction recovery specialists, and more. The Pratt offers these free services at Library locations across the city. In FY26, the seven social impact programs offered were BGE @ the Pratt, Healthcare Access Maryland, Housing Navigators, Lawyer in the Library, Peer Navigators, Social Worker in the Library, and Wellness at the Pratt.

10,737

patrons served across all social impact programs

IMPACT

AMS



“Our Housing Navigator... has had a very positive impact at our Branch and in the community. Her work has been instrumental in connecting individuals to resources, providing guidance, and supporting people in finding stable housing. We’ve seen how her presence has built trust and given many a sense of hope, which has been invaluable for the community.”

— Lisa Smith, Cherry Hill Branch Manager



Social Impact Programs

Operation Warm

In Winter 2025, Operation Warm generously sponsored a giveaway of 828 coats for Baltimore City children aged 12 and under. Events were held at the Herring Run, Walbrook, Brooklyn, and Johnston Square branches in November and December. Operation Warm extends the Library’s reach beyond books to provide children with “warmth, confidence, and hope.” Community partners were invited to meet with families and inform them about essential resources. The connections that Operation Warm fosters within the community have ripple effects that extend well beyond the events themselves.

The Pratt thanks the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, CASA Maryland, the Baltimore City Health Department, the Greater Baybrook Alliance, the Parks & People Foundation, the CONNECT Project, St. Vincent de Paul Head Start, and the Family Tree of Baltimore for their involvement.

Pratt Free Market 1st Anniversary

On September 27, 2025, the Pratt Free Market celebrated its one-year anniversary, marking a successful first year of expanding food access and helping reduce food insecurity across Baltimore City. The event brought together upwards of 200 community members, volunteers, partners, and supporters for a day of celebration featuring live music, meals, fresh produce giveaways, and connections to health and social service resources.

Throughout its first year, the market has become a trusted resource for households facing financial challenges. Intake data highlighted that most participating families report annual incomes below \$57,000, and many are navigating unemployment or financial hardship. The Market primarily serves households with families consisting of three or more members and several children under the age of 18. By providing consistent access to nutritious food, the Pratt Free Market, supported by strong community partnerships, continues to help families by reducing financial strain for healthy and nutritious food.

Housing Navigators

Housing Navigators offered support with resolving potential or current housing crises. The Housing Navigator program served 1,765 library patrons in FY26, an 18.5% increase from the previous fiscal year. Due to completion of funding, the program ended in May 2026. The Library is grateful to our partners at the Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services for their dedication to serving the community for the past three years.

BGE @ the Pratt

Through BGE @ the Pratt, BGE Ambassadors help patrons understand bills, evaluate energy efficiency, and offer guidance on energy assistance applications. BGE representatives were available at the library to assist patrons following the winter deep freeze and triple-digit summer temperature spikes this year. BGE offered 18 programs at four library locations and answered more than 140 patron questions.

Social Worker in the Library

Through Pratt's Social Worker in the Library Program, four Library social workers are available to help library patrons, especially those experiencing challenges related to finance, mental health, or other stressors, with resources and referrals. The Social Work team served over 3,100 patrons in FY26 — more than any other social impact program.

Lawyer in the Library

One of Pratt's longest-running community partners, Maryland Legal Aid, continues to offer the Lawyer in the Library program through their Community Lawyering Initiative. Through the Lawyer in the Library program, lawyers are available to give one-on-one legal advice about issues including expungement, divorce, custody, and more. In FY26, the program was offered at the Cherry Hill and Pennsylvania Avenue Branches. The lawyers served 333 patrons and opened 224 cases.

The Lawyer in the Library: Immigration Information program, which began in 2024, continued in FY26. Two partner organizations, Just Neighbors and World Relief, provided support to 153 patrons at the Southeast Anchor location. Following the program's success in the Highlandtown neighborhood, the Pratt also began offering Lawyer in the Library: Immigration Information at the newly reopened Brooklyn Branch in June 2026.

Peer Navigators

In July 2025, Peer Navigators provided support to the Penn North community following a mass overdose event. Their efforts were recognized by Mayor Brandon Scott and the City of Baltimore. In the following weeks, the Peer Navigator team provided NARCAN training to many staff members and community organizations, including the entire Pratt Security team and the Baltimore City Council.

In 2026, Pratt expanded our Peer Navigator program with funding from the Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs, Baltimore City. Fourteen peer navigator trainees, a registered peer supervisor, and a full-time certified peer recovery specialist provide peer support and harm reduction services at seven library locations.



“It’s important to have peers in the library because we’re approachable. Because of our lived experience, we’re able to connect with patrons.”

— Nicole Brown, Peer Navigator Trainee

Opposite: Children receive coats and books at Operation Warm.
A volunteer helps a customer at the Pratt Free Market.

This page: Lawyer in the Library. Peer Navigator graduation.
Wellness at the Pratt.





Staff Day

This year's Staff Development Day brought together more than 250 employees from across the organization for a day of learning, connection, and professional growth. Hosted at Coppin State University, the event was designed to support staff development while fostering collaboration across departments and locations.



Staff participated in sessions focused on accessibility and inclusive service, workplace belonging, conflict resolution, mindfulness and stress management, religious accommodation and awareness, and overdose prevention and response. The event was made possible through collaboration with partners from across Maryland and Baltimore City, including the City of Baltimore's Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, United Way of Central Maryland, and other community partners. Among the most highly valued session offerings were Calm in the Stacks: Mindfulness Techniques for Library Personnel and Overdose Prevention and Response in Baltimore City, which provided practical tools staff could apply both professionally and personally. Participants praised the relevance and usefulness of these sessions, particularly the overdose prevention training's approach to harm reduction and community support. The Building Inclusion at Pratt workshop also received strong feedback for its interactive format and focus on creating a welcoming environment for patrons and staff. A Leadership Speed Networking session provided employees with an opportunity to engage directly with Library leadership and strengthen organizational connections.

This year's Staff Development Day successfully advanced professional learning, strengthened organizational connections, and reinforced the Pratt's commitment to investing in its workforce while creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

Baker Award

The Baker Award recognizes an Enoch Pratt Free Library employee whose contributions have strengthened the Library and advanced its mission of serving the community in Baltimore. The award was established in memory of longtime Trustee and Board President William G. Baker, Jr. and honors excellence in public service, innovation, collaboration, and professional growth. Every year, employees nominate their colleagues whose work has made a lasting impact, on anything from exceptional operational improvements to creative community engagement.

In 2026, the Baker Award was presented to the Teen Center's Donaven Bunting, who manages the Makerspace and has built a vibrant, creative community for young people. His dedication and commitment to the Pratt exemplified the spirit of the Pratt and of this distinguished honor.



Fiscal Year Highlights

149,582

active cardholders

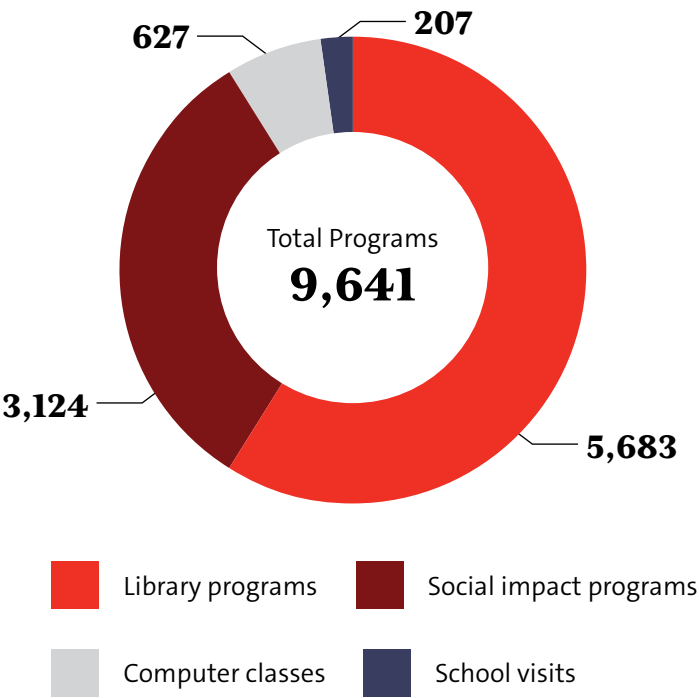
1,164,981

in-person visits

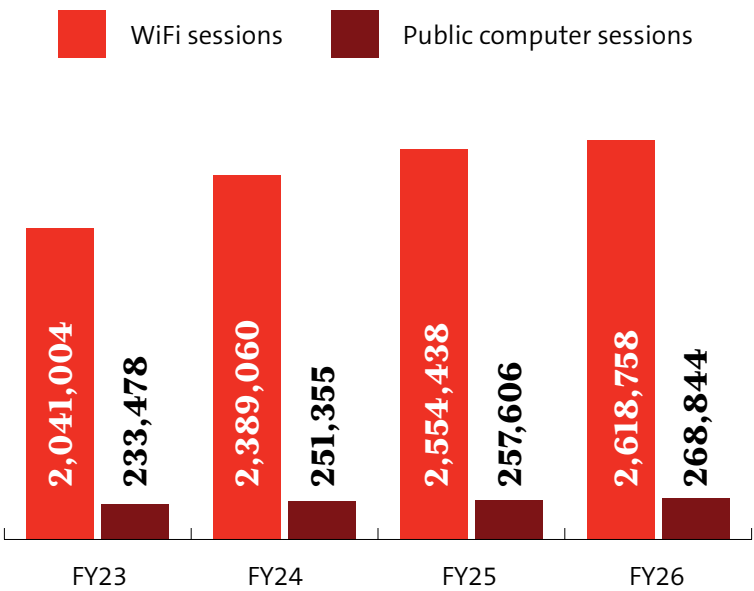
3,277,758

website visits

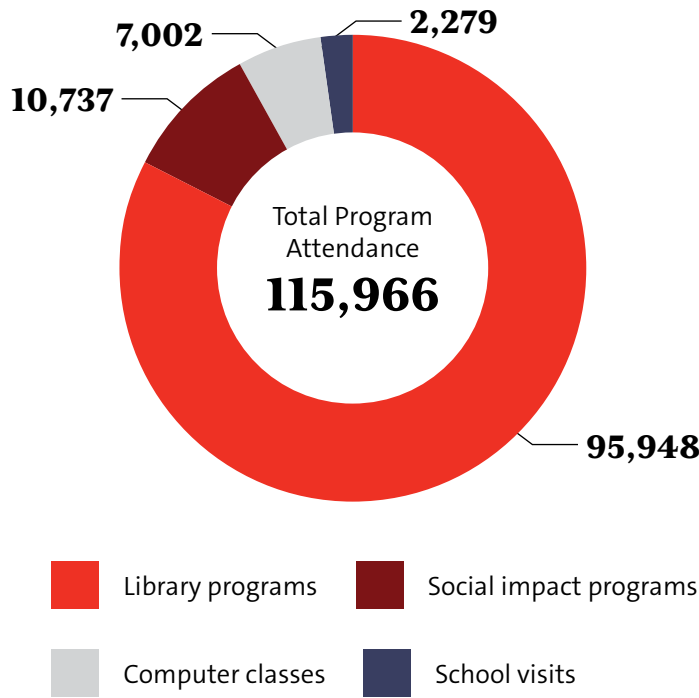
Library Programs



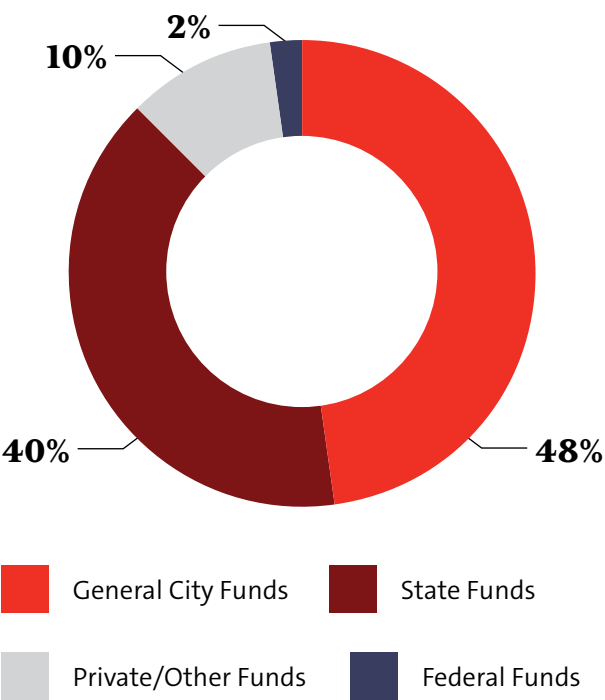
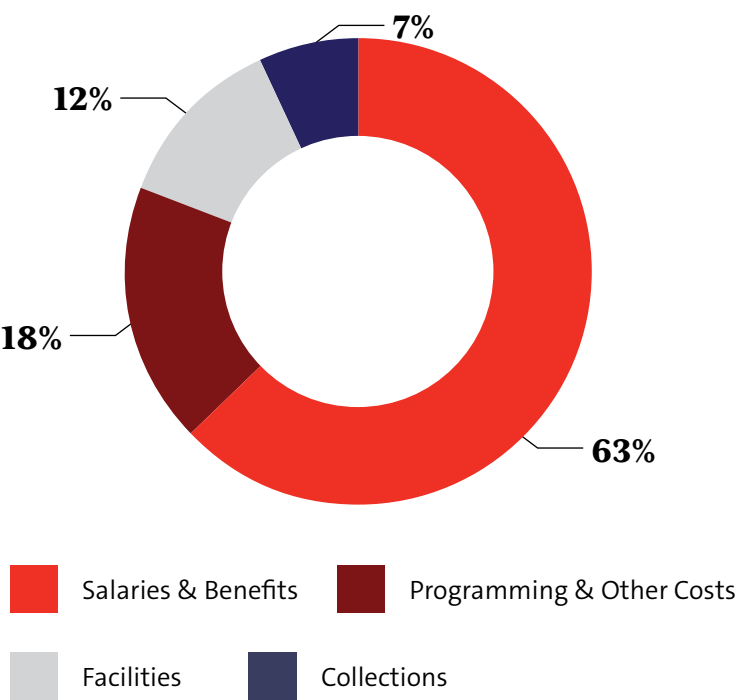
WiFi & Public Computer Sessions



Library Program Attendance



Financial Report



FY26 Operating Expenditures

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 36,746,519.46
Programming & Other Costs	\$ 10,517,513.20
Facilities	\$ 7,272,024.97
Collection	\$ 3,925,559.40

TOTAL FY26 Operating Expenditures **\$ 58,461,617.03**

FY26 Operating Revenue

General City Funds	\$ 27,508,378.42
State Funds	\$ 22,645,113.00
Private/Other Funds	\$ 5,848,844.17
Federal Funds	\$ 1,264,256.86

TOTAL FY26 Operating Revenue **\$ 57,266,592.45**

General City Funds: Funding provided by Baltimore City allows for operation of 22 library buildings and mobile outreach services. Pratt Library buildings are owned by the City of Baltimore.

State Funds: Funding from the State of Maryland supports the operation of the State Library Resource Center and expanded hours for all 22 Pratt locations.

Private/Other Funds: Funding from donors, foundations, and non-state grants is often restricted and helps supplement governmental funds. This funding allows for all Pratt programming, including Writers LIVE!, the Brown Lecture series, Summer Break Baltimore, and more.

Locations

CENTRAL LIBRARY & STATE LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTER

400 Cathedral St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
PHONE: 410-396-5430
EMAIL: info@prattlibrary.org

BROOKLYN BRANCH

300 E. Patapsco Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21225
PHONE: 410-396-1120
EMAIL: brk@prattlibrary.org

CANTON BRANCH

1030 S. Ellwood Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21224
PHONE: 410-396-8548
EMAIL: cnt@prattlibrary.org

CHERRY HILL BRANCH

606 Cherry Hill Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21225
PHONE: 410-396-1168
EMAIL: chr@prattlibrary.org

EDMONDSON AVENUE BRANCH

4330 Edmondson Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21229
PHONE: 410-396-0946
EMAIL: edm@prattlibrary.org

FOREST PARK BRANCH

3023 Garrison Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21216
PHONE: 410-396-0942
EMAIL: frs@prattlibrary.org

GOVANS BRANCH

5714 Bellona Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21212
PHONE: 410-396-6098
EMAIL: gvn@prattlibrary.org

HAMILTON BRANCH

5910 Harford Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21214
PHONE: 410-396-6088
EMAIL: hml@prattlibrary.org

HAMPDEN BRANCH

3641 Falls Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21211
PHONE: 410-396-6043
EMAIL: hmp@prattlibrary.org

HERRING RUN BRANCH

3801 Erdman Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21213
PHONE: 410-396-0996
EMAIL: hrr@prattlibrary.org

JOHNSTON SQUARE BRANCH

1132 Greenmount Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21202
PHONE: 410-396-0984
EMAIL: jhn@prattlibrary.org

LIGHT STREET BRANCH

1251 Light St.
Baltimore, MD 21230
PHONE: 410-396-1096
EMAIL: lgh@prattlibrary.org

NORTHWOOD BRANCH

4420 Loch Raven Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21218
PHONE: 410-396-6076
EMAIL: nrt@prattlibrary.org

OPEN WORKS TECHNOLOGY LAB

1400 Greenmount Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21202
PHONE: 410-862-0424

ORLEANS STREET BRANCH

1303 Orleans St.
Baltimore, MD 21231
PHONE: 410-396-0970
EMAIL: orl@prattlibrary.org

PATTERSON PARK BRANCH

158 N. Linwood Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21224
PHONE: 410-396-0983
EMAIL: ptt@prattlibrary.org

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE BRANCH

1531 W. North Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21217
PHONE: 410-396-0399
EMAIL: pnn@prattlibrary.org

REISTERSTOWN ROAD BRANCH

6310 Reisterstown Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21215
PHONE: 410-396-0948
EMAIL: rst@prattlibrary.org

RITA CHURCH TECHNOLOGY LAB

2101 Saint Lo Dr.
Baltimore, MD 21213
PHONE: 410-396-8958

ROLAND PARK BRANCH

5108 Roland Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21210
PHONE: 410-396-6099
EMAIL: rln@prattlibrary.org

SOUTHEAST ANCHOR LIBRARY

3601 Eastern Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21224
PHONE: 410-396-1580
EMAIL: sel@prattlibrary.org

WALBROOK BRANCH

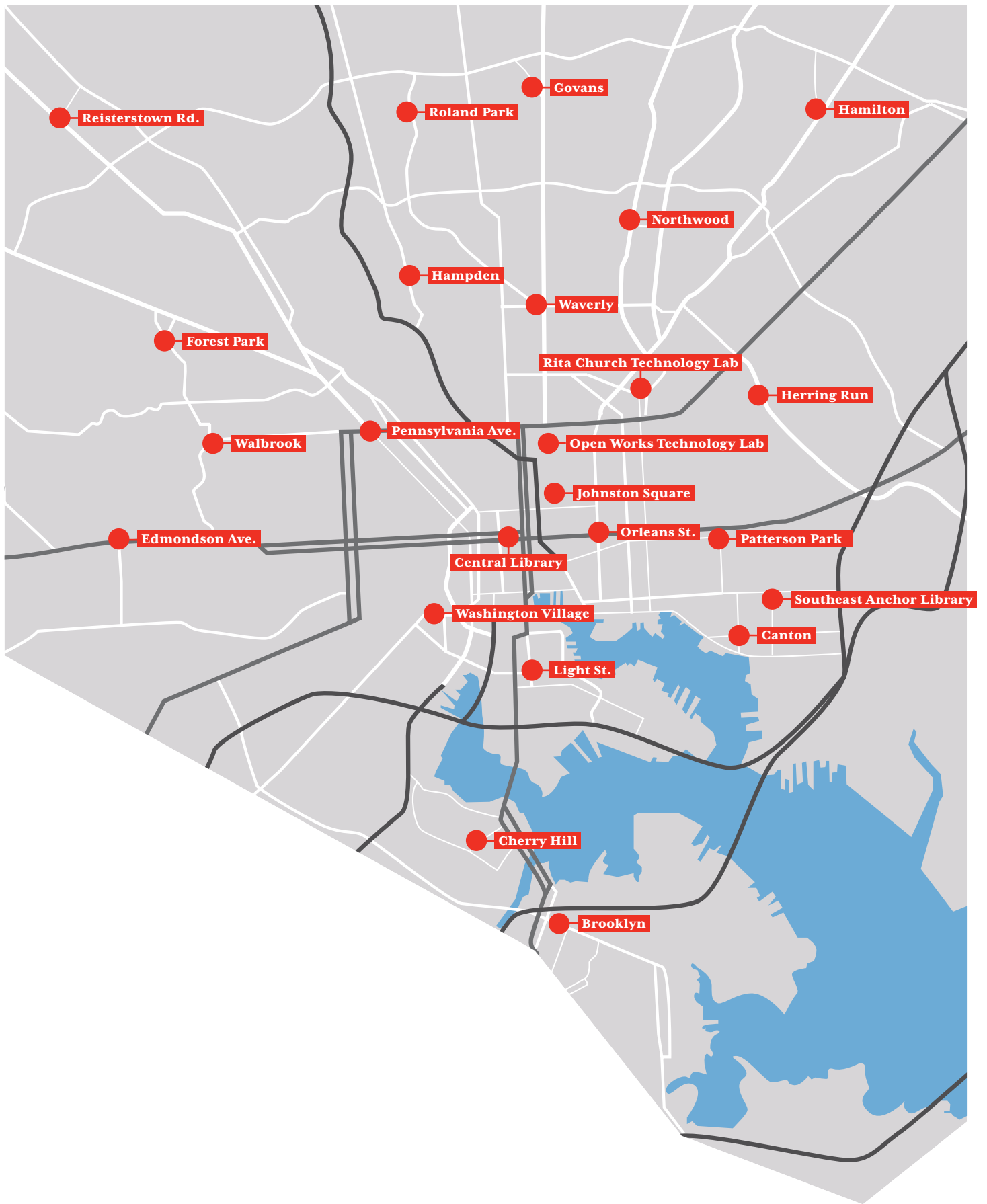
3203 W. North Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21216
PHONE: 410-396-0935
EMAIL: wlb@prattlibrary.org

WASHINGTON VILLAGE BRANCH

856 Washington Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21230
PHONE: 410-396-1099
EMAIL: wsh@prattlibrary.org

WAVERLY BRANCH

400 E. 33rd St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
PHONE: 410-396-6053
EMAIL: wvr@prattlibrary.org





Top row: A man poses with a Pratt Library card near the Inner Harbor. Customers explore the House of Melo exhibit.

Second row: Women in Workforce attendees. A mother and child at the opening of the Johnston Square Branch. A man shows off his Library card at Johnston Square. A mother reads to two young girls at the Govans Branch.

Third row: Indie Game Fest attendees try out a game demo. A customer looking at the "Pioneers" exhibit on display in at the Central Library during Pride Month.

Bottom row: Families receive winter coats during Operation Warm.

**“My library shall be for all, rich and poor without
distinction of race or color.”**

— Enoch Pratt, 1882



ENOCH PRATT *free* LIBRARY

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