

Report to the Community





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Message From the County Executive

I am happy to share the Montgomery County Public Libraries' (MCPL) annual report. This past year, MCPL continued to serve as vibrant hubs of community connection, education, and cultural enrichment. I had the pleasure of experiencing this firsthand at several events that showcase the incredible work our libraries do to engage and inspire residents of all ages.

In August, I had a groovy time at the Just for the Record—A Vinyl Day event at the Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library in Downtown Silver Spring. This event was a testament to the power of music and storytelling to bring people together. DJ Johnny “Juice” Rosado shared his personal and professional journey, weaving the history and culture of hip-hop with his experiences in New York City, which resonated deeply with our local community. Surrounded by local residents buying vinyl records, creating art, playing DJ sets, and sharing stories, I was reminded of the unique role libraries play as spaces for cultural celebration and community engagement.

The McGee Library itself is a symbol of the values we hold dear in Montgomery County. Named after Brigadier General Charles E. McGee, a decorated Tuskegee Airman and lifelong advocate for education, this library stands as a tribute to breaking barriers and uplifting others—values mirrored in the music and stories we celebrated that day.

Earlier in the year, I participated in Read Across America events at the White Oak and Wheaton Libraries, where I joined children and older adults from the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA)’s Heyman Interages Center for intergenerational literacy activities. Sharing stories with children and seeing their excitement for reading reinforced for me the vital role our libraries play in fostering a love of learning and bridging generations.

This year also saw the debut of the new full-access digital library cards, which allow anyone who lives, works or attends school in Montgomery County to access our extensive digital catalog without visiting a physical branch. Widespread access to public library materials and services is critical for creating a well-educated and informed community. With this innovation, MCPL has made it easier than ever for residents throughout the region to enjoy the rich resources of our library system.

These are just a few examples of MCPL’s impact on the ground, in communities across the County. From early literacy initiatives to career readiness programs, and from celebrating diverse cultures to providing access to technology, our libraries empower residents and create opportunities for growth and connection.

I encourage everyone to visit the MCPL branch closest to your home or workplace. Borrow a book or two—whether it’s a bestseller, a classic or a practical guide for your next adventure. Explore the many resources available, from digital tools to classes and events, and discover how our libraries are transforming lives every day.

Thank you to our MCPL team and to all the residents who support and contribute to our library system. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected Montgomery County.



Marc Elrich

**Montgomery County
Executive**



Message From the Director

What an extraordinary year it has been at Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL)! I am honored to share the FY2024 annual report with you as the new director of MCPL. I've been deeply inspired by the remarkable achievements and stories of impact reflected in this report.

This year built upon MCPL's rich legacy of service, innovation, and community engagement. Our talented staff, dedicated volunteers, and community partners have worked tirelessly to make our libraries vital spaces for growth and connection. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- Record-breaking attendance in programs across all age groups, reflecting the demand for meaningful, engaging library experiences.
- Summer Reading Challenge, including the first-ever Adult Challenge, brought more participants than ever into our branches after hours and to community events across the county.
- The launch of digital library cards, providing expanded access to individuals living and working throughout the DC Metro area.
- Innovative new programs, such as the Hatchlings early literacy initiative, the thought-provoking Contemporary Conversations series, and Blerdtino @ MoComCon.
- A 100% increase in teen programming, including the launch of a Teen Mental Health Week to address critical post-pandemic mental health challenges.

These milestones, along with many others, highlight how MCPL continues to meet the evolving needs of our community. Beyond books and buildings, libraries are places of transformation, empowerment, and connection, as shown by the stories and successes in this report.

Our achievements align with MCPL's core strategic priorities:

- Preparing children for kindergarten with strong early literacy programs.
- Helping teens succeed by equipping them for college and careers.
- Empowering non-English speakers to fully engage in society.
- Bridging the digital divide for residents with limited access to technology.

My vision is to build on these successes by deepening our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I want to foster even more opportunities for learning and engagement, ensuring that MCPL continues to be a trusted resource and source of inspiration for all members of our community.

Thank you for your ongoing support of MCPL. I look forward to seeing you in the library!

Warmly,



Darcell Graham

Director

Montgomery County
Public Libraries



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MCPL by the Numbers



22 Library Branches

Including the Correctional Facility Library

9,860

Programs

270,850

Program Attendees

116,746

Meeting Rooms Used



3,542,047

Library Visits

135,887

Active Users



10,863

Interlibrary loans
received and fulfilled



7,953,911

Total Circulation

2,632,098

Circulation of Adult's Physical Material

308,083

Circulation of Teen's Physical Material

5,013,730

Circulation of Children's Physical Material

1,706,271

Total Physical Items
in Collection



Our Customers

Read More Everywhere!

103,278

Libby Active Users

226,697

Hoopla ebooks

1,415,000

Libby eBook checkouts

41,400

Hoopla comics

299,837

Libby magazines



1,243,017

eBook/eAudiobook
Collection Inventory

1,683,097

eBook Circulation

810,630

Audio—downloadable units

1,402,660

eAudio Circulation

And They Watched & Listened Too!

1,043,000

Libby eAudiobook checkouts

288,200

Kanopy eVideo plays

76,167

Hoopla eVideo

19,308

eMusic

340,352

Hoopla eAudiobook





Community & Conversation

Just for the Record—A Vinyl Day

On August 12, 2023, **Just for the Record—A Vinyl Day**, brought over 1,500 patrons together for a celebration of records, DJ culture, creativity and community, at the Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library in downtown Silver Spring. Music enthusiasts gathered from across the greater DC Metro Area (DMV) for a day filled with engaging activities, inspiring speakers, and hands-on workshops.

Highlights of Vinyl Day 2024:

- In addition to story time and a kids dance party, activities occupied all library floors and the Levine School of music. Sessions included music production; scratch basics, including blending, mixing and STEM workshops; create your own graffiti tag and album cover art classes; DJ basics for kids, teens, and adults; songwriting, and break dance and songwriting workshops.
- The FADERATION Mid-Atlantic DJ Scratch Battle, the first ever hosted by a public library.
- Open-format lounge sets from professional DJs from throughout the DMV reverberated through the library floors all day.

Vinyl Day was made possible through the generous support and partnership of Radio One, Levine Music, Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Classroom2Community, and the Mid-Atlantic Scratch League (MASL).

PRESS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUYV2u5ewVA>
- <https://www.fox5dc.com/video/1262750>

“Loved the program!
More workshops like this in the future!”
VINYL DAY ATTENDEE 2024





Summer Reading Challenge

Adventure Starts at MCPL: Summer Reading Challenge 2024

The **Summer Reading Challenge 2024** was a tremendous success, with **17,000 registrants—a 20% increase from 2023**. This year's theme, Adventure Starts Here, invited early learners, teens, and adults to explore the joy of reading and connect with Montgomery County in new and exciting ways, thanks to support from our partner the Montgomery Parks Foundation.

The debut of the **Adult Summer Reading (ASR) program** drew an impressive **3,915 participants**, exceeding expectations and setting the stage for future growth. ASR focused on enriching the library experience and fostering deeper community engagement. Standout events included:

- **Trivia Night** at 7 Locks Brewery
- **Booktails: A Night of Mocktails and Books** and **Drag Bingo Night** at the Gaithersburg Library
- A **craft table** at the Good Hope Community Festival
- **Button making** at the Silver Spring Farmers Market



We held numerous programs in Montgomery Parks' beautiful green spaces, including story times for families, creating opportunities to enjoy the outdoors while fostering a love of reading.

The Washington Nationals returned as a Summer Reading Partner, with Early Literacy challenge participants receiving a total of 6,388 game tickets for completing challenge badges.

The Summer Reading Challenge 2024 affirmed MCPL's mission to inspire a love of reading, foster community connections, and create inclusive, enriching experiences for all.

Montgomery County Public Libraries

**ADVENTURE
STARTS HERE**

2024 Summer Reading Challenge

Over **16,650**
participants

6,388



Nationals
tickets distributed

3,194



finished **Badge 2**
under the age of 12



BLERDTINO @ MoComCon Centers BIPOC Creators

Held once again at the Germantown Library and our Upcounty neighbor and event partner Black Rock Center, over 4,000 patrons attended MoComCon, MCPL's annual celebration of all things fandom! This year's event included the groundbreaking **BLERDTINO @ MoComCon** ("BAM!").

Blerdtino—the first such event at a public library—celebrated fandoms through a multicultural lens.

- In collaboration with Classroom2Community and the Maryland State Library Agency, BAM! engaged Black and Latino youth in the library through the comic book, gaming and pop culture industries, focusing on Teens of Color (TOC) and English as a Second Language (ESL) youth.
- Programming addressed systemic racism, cultural underrepresentation, limited access to resources, and educational disparities.

BLERDTINO Presenters included:

- David "D-Stroy" Melendez from Sirius XM, and Host of "Showoff Your Gems (Blerdtino Edition)."
- DJs Virak, TrickSet and Phenomenon from the Mid-Atlantic Scratch League (MASL) spun music including cartoon theme songs and live mixing of Anime videos.
- Bomani Armah presented a Kids Songwriting Workshop Called "Baba Got Bars!"
- Maki Roll presented Cosplay for Black and Latino Creatives.
- Latino ComicCon Nerdino founder Thomas E. Delfi presented "And I Got Away with It Too! A Supervillain's Guide to the Creative Arts Industry."



Contemporary Conversations Amplify Critical Cultural Voices

2024's slate of Contemporary Conversations speakers featured the Lincoln Center's inaugural poet-in-residence, a B-Boy and the people's Hip Hop DJ Scholar, a renowned Latinx professor and prolific author, and a National Poetry Slam champion.

Sponsored by Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, with support from Classroom2Community and other community partners, the Contemporary Conversations series welcomed hundreds of patrons to library branches throughout the county to build community through art, culture, and current events, and our speakers reached classrooms full of MCPS students at school presentations.



**Dr. DJ Kuttin Kandi
& BBoy Danny Nguyen**
August 12, 2023



Dr. Tony Medina
October 11, 2023

“It is the first time I’ve attended one of these events. I found it super interesting and informative. I’m going to be more in contact with the library!

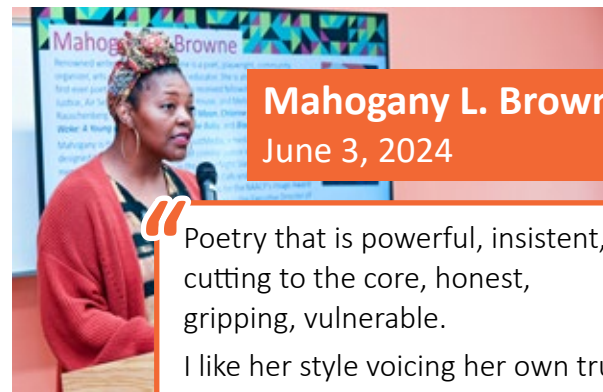
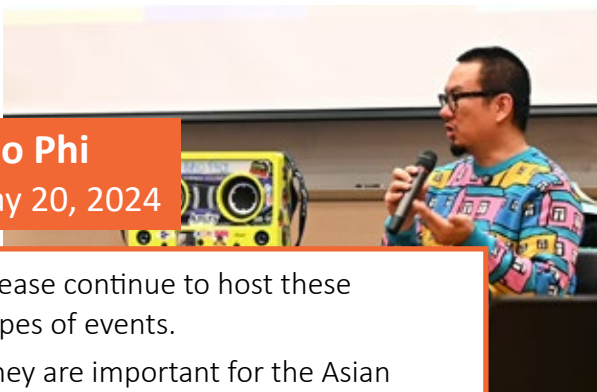
CONTEMPORARY CONVERSATIONS
ATTENDEE 2023

Bao Phi
May 20, 2024

“Please continue to host these types of events.

They are important for the Asian American Pacific Islander community and the community as a whole.

CONTEMPORARY CONVERSATIONS
ATTENDEE 2024



Mahogany L. Browne
June 3, 2024

“Poetry that is powerful, insistent, cutting to the core, honest, gripping, vulnerable. I like her style voicing her own truths. Yet she does not strike as bitter or angry. She is healing.

CONTEMPORARY CONVERSATIONS
ATTENDEE 2024



Preparing Children Five and Under for Kindergarten

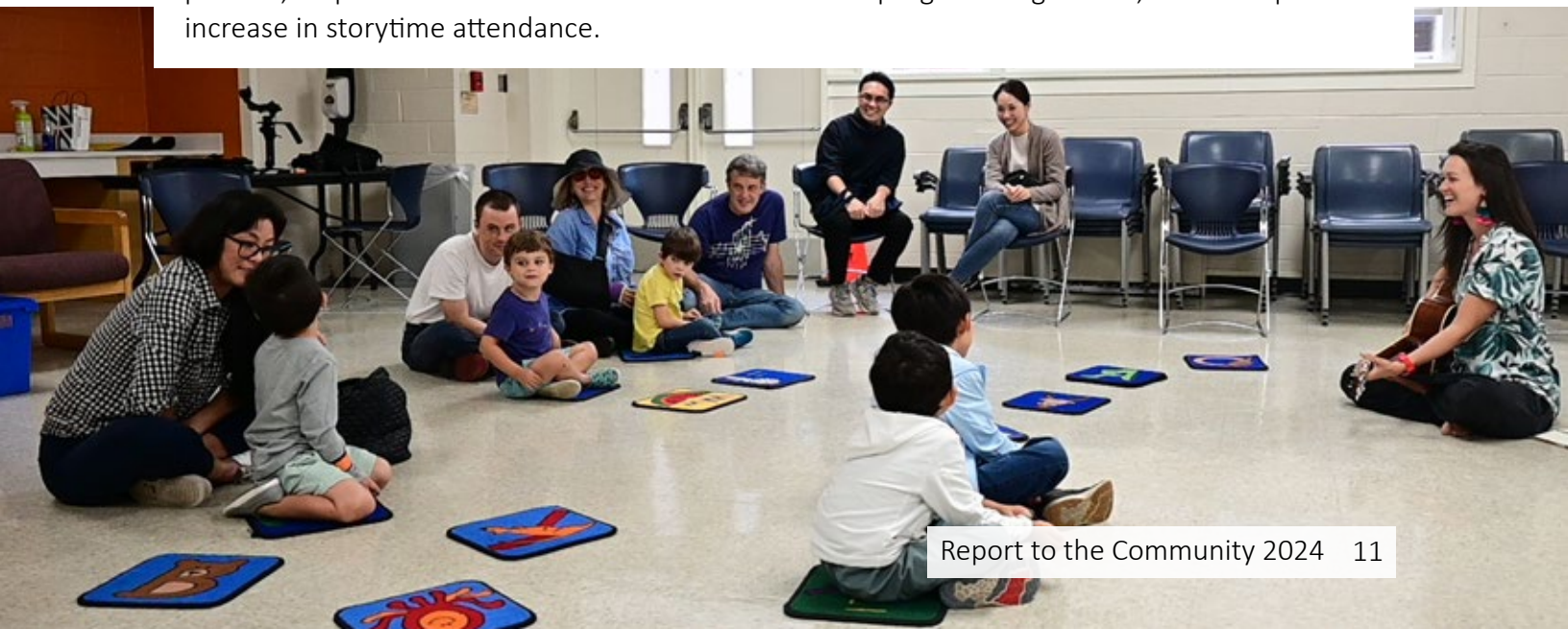
Hatchlings Takes Off

The Hatchlings program that launched in March 2023 took full flight in October with 12 programs, eight of them bilingual in English and Spanish, at Long Branch, Wheaton and White Oak Libraries. 250 parents, caregivers, and children attended two sessions—Ready to Hatch and In the Nest—focused on preparing the new baby and caregivers for early literacy activities before birth through toddler years, in books and music!

We look forward to next year, when the Hatchlings program will expand and serve more families with a revitalized curriculum at many more branches throughout the County!

Early Literacy Programming

Our Early Literacy programming offerings and attendance skyrocketed this year. We saw a 48 percent increase in children's programming attendance, with story times alone increasing by 56 percent, 34 percent more attendees came to children's programming overall, with a 50 percent increase in storytime attendance.

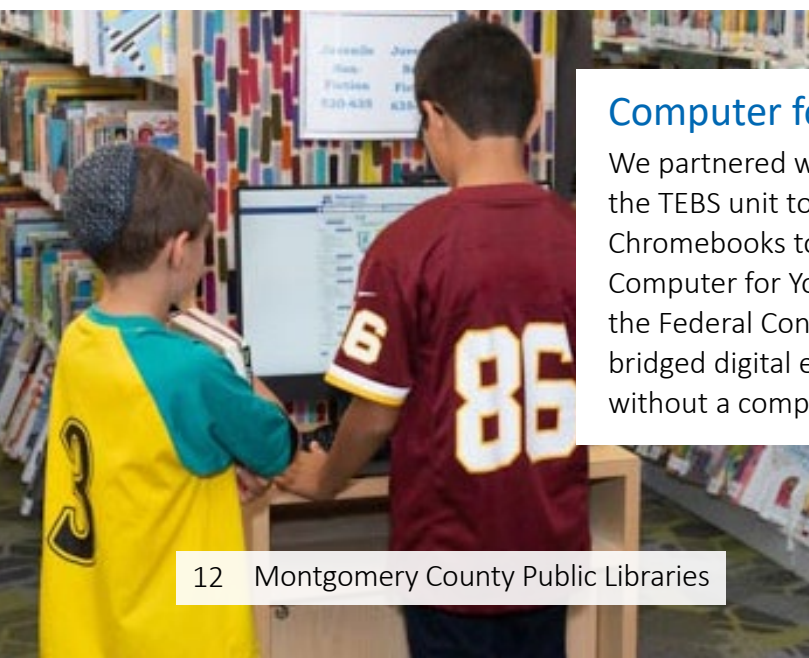




Advancing Digital Access, Equity and Inclusion

Getting Digital Carded

The MCPL digital card—with a new online application system for obtaining full-service library cards—launched in June 2024, with a full promotional campaign throughout the area. Nearly 4,000 patrons registered for a new digital card by June 30! This new system provides convenient access to our collection of digital resources, including e-books, audiobooks and online databases and programs, for adults living and working in Montgomery County.



Computer for You Partnership

We partnered with Montgomery Connects in the TEBS unit to distribute a total of 60,000 Chromebooks to County residents through the Computer for You program. Made possible by the Federal Connectivity Fund, this partnership bridged digital equity gaps for MCPL cardholders without a computer at home.



More Teens, More Impact: A Milestone Year!

Teen programming soared this year, with an increase to 3,323 programs system-wide over 1,700 in FY23. Teen Advisory Board (TAB) meetings and events also expanded throughout the branches, growing from 19 this year from 3-5 last year, with 175 related programs.



Teen Program Highlights:

- Teen Mental Health Week, April 6–13, 2024
 - This week was a collaborative project between many County and community agencies, educators, and performers, dedicated to addressing the pressing mental health challenges facing teenagers in Montgomery County as they navigate the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Collaboration partners included EveryMind, SMYAL, Community Building Art Works, and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and Family Justice Center.
 - A series of informative and empowering events designed to shed light on mental health issues and provide resources for support.

- Featured a coordinated social media awareness campaign for the first time, and kicked off with a parent resource fair and performance from Grammy-nominated performer Queen Sheba and a poetry open mic with Simply Sherri.
- Recycled Fashion Show at Gaithersburg Library with professional model and winner of America's Next Top Model, Nicole Abuhamada
- Several programs provided guidance for teens preparing for college and the workforce. Highlights included Montgomery College information and preparation sessions, and college essay and application preparation workshops at branches across the county.
- MCPL Teens explored service as well, earning Montgomery County Public Schools' SSL hours for program participation.





Active & Informed Older Adults!

Opportunities for engagement and learning for adults aged 55+ grew significantly last year. Partnerships included Montgomery County Departments of Health & Human Services, Recreation, Environmental Protection and Parks, plus other non-profits, community organizations and hospitals.

- The annual **Countywide Active Aging Week in October 2023** drew approximately 1,000 older adults to 90 programs in locations around Montgomery County. The week ended with the County's annual signature celebration—a sold-out crowd of 300 at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton for activities like yoga, meditation, crafts, and community-building.
- The popular **Senior Planet** tech lecture series returned in person to three branches. Participation surged to over 460 attendees in FY24—a remarkable 93% increase from FY23's 240 attendees. Topics participants enjoyed most included smartphone photography, online privacy protection, and social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.
- The **Bone Builders** program, offered in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services, provided hundreds of residents aged 55+ with nearly 360 free, evidence-based weight and balance training classes designed to promote bone health and prevent falls. The program adding sessions at the Potomac Library and expanding offerings at Olney and Kensington Park locations, with waitlists for nearly every session. Bone Builders remains a cornerstone of MCPL's commitment to older adults' well-being.





Collaborating for Community Impact

Tax Aide

Montgomery County Volunteer Center & AARP provided free tax preparation assistance in our libraries to low-to-moderate income Montgomery County taxpayers, with special attention to adults aged 60+.

Tax Aide by the #s:

- Tax returns prepared: 4,379 federal & 4,366 state
- Total refunds claimed: \$3,816,611

Social Security Education

The Social Security Administration, plus five partner local library systems (Calvert County, Charles County Kent County, Prince George's County Memorial and St. Mary's County) provided two monthly programs, in English and Spanish, focused on:

- Medicare
- Retirement information
- Disability benefits
- Ask an expert

This collaboration grew attendance to approximately 250 people.

Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) and Heyman Interages Center partnered with **MCPL** on Read Across America Week and Read Across America Day at White Oak, Wheaton and Gaithersburg Libraries. Volunteers (50+), including County Executive Marc Elrich, read to 42 children.



The Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships and the Gilchrist Immigration Center implemented and revitalized Citizenship Corners at 10 branches, with materials from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The goal is to provide customers with accurate information about the process of naturalization and becoming a U.S. citizen.

Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Pepco staffed Illumination Stations at all branches weekly, all year to help customers understand how to lower utility bills, apply for energy assistance, and swap incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs for new energy efficient LED light bulbs.

Montgomery County Board of Elections held voter engagement campaigns at all branches in December 2023, and January and March 2024, plus:

- National Poll Worker Recruitment Day—August 23, 2023
- Constitution/Citizenship Day—September 17, 2024
- National Help America Vote Day—January 30, 2024

A Wheaton Cultural Project Grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County and the Maryland State Arts Council supported graphic novel, animation and cartooning workshops in Spanish and English, presented by artist Leila Cabib. This long-running partnership served approximately 100 tweens, teens and older adults.

“Learning to draw the way a cartoonist would was fun and amazing.

ANIMATION WORKSHOP
ATTENDEE

Workforce and Job Preparation

Workforce and Job Preparation programming reached 3,044 library customers this year with programs including Interviewing for Success, HIRE, How to Apply for Jobs with Montgomery County, and LinkedIn Bootcamp.

“The 1:1 Coaching session was excellent. The coaches were very helpful and supportive and provided invaluable information to move my resume forward.”
HIRE ATTENDEE

“Top notch praise for the expertise and presentation style of Dr. Barnes and the professionalism of the MCPL staff who support this excellent program.”
LINKEDIN BOOTCAMP ATTENDEE

“Melissa was excellent in her presentation. She made the session lively and engaging. The 2 hours passed by like minutes. I learnt a lot that will enable me apply for jobs and prepare for interviews.”
INTERVIEWING FOR SUCCESS ATTENDEE

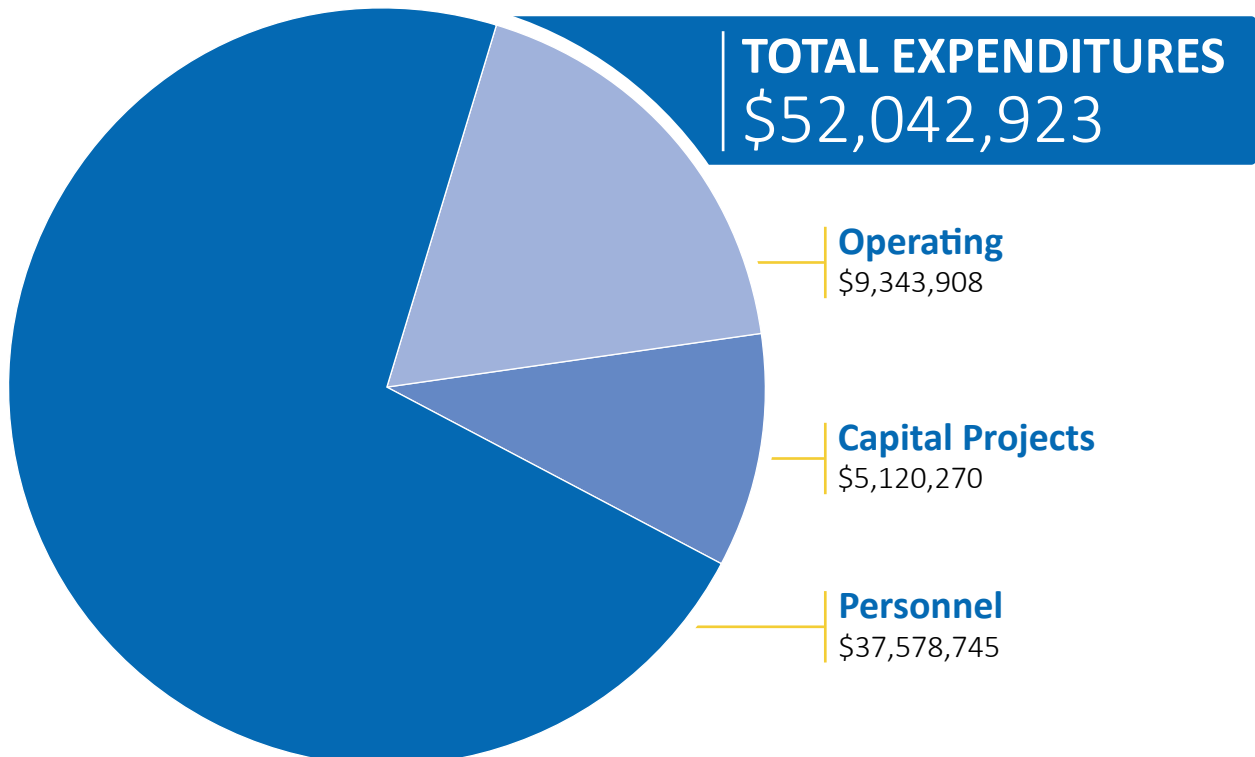
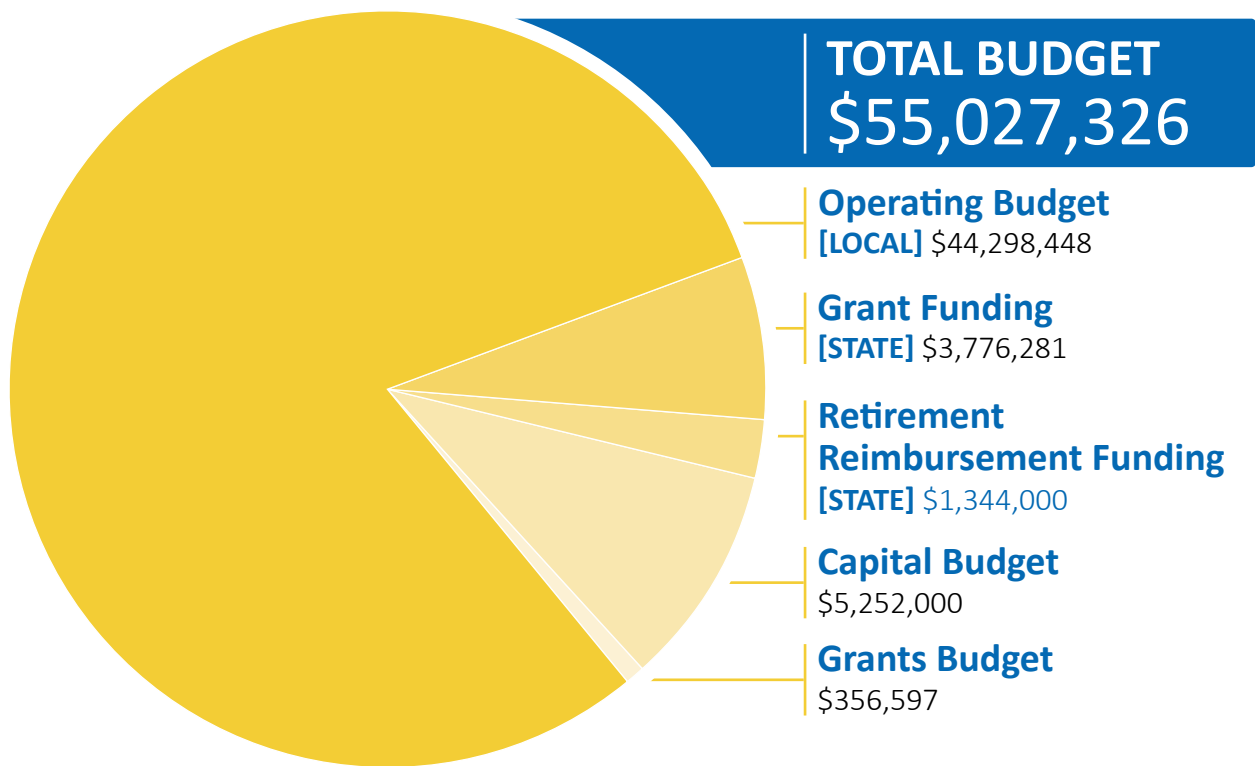
My name is Eneshal.
Mother, community advocate and high school graduate.

“The library provided me with not just access to space to learn. The library set the stage by partnering with COHS, and has truly inspired me to explore creative learning environments and best practices through educational attainment and knowledge. I began my journey with the Praisner Library in Burtonsville, MD and they connected me to the scholarships to obtain my high school diploma, not a GED.”

ENESHAL



FY24 Budget







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Vice President

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Natali Fani-Gonzalez

Evan Glass

Will Jawando

Sidney Katz

Dawn Luedtke

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Laurie-Anne Sayles



www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library