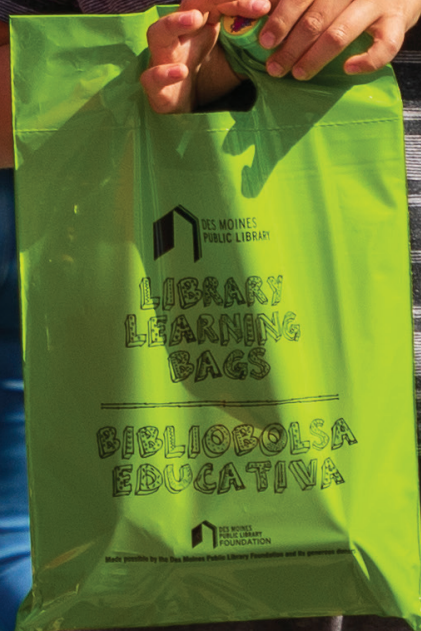


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ANNUAL REPORT





Susan A. Woody,
Director,
Des Moines Public Library

I could look at the past few years at the Des Moines Public Library and focus on the surprises, challenges, and struggles of the COVID-19 pandemic that touched every part of our organization and the communities we serve.

But instead I choose to celebrate our accomplishments during this unprecedented time. And there are many!

I am grateful for the innovations, ideas, and initiatives of our library staff that allowed us to continue serving our users. Sure, those services looked new and different at times, but as the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention.

We set new records for digital checkouts and engagement. We revealed our long-awaited Strategic Plan that will guide the library for the next few years. We created entirely new services, like Book Chat, that are now permanent. We did storytimes in public parks, hosted world-famous authors on Zoom, and ramped up our community outreach efforts to stay connected to those who needed us most.

And, most importantly, we never stopped adapting, even as the pandemic caused fluctuations in our in-person services, programs, hours, and more. Through it all, we stayed true to our mission: To strengthen our community by connecting people with ideas and the tools they need to enrich their lives.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this year's Annual Report. It means the world to me that you are so engaged with us, as we share the moments and services that helped us stay engaged with you.



Mission

To strengthen our community by connecting people with ideas and the tools they need to enrich their lives.

Vision

To create a stronger, more dynamic Des Moines where everyone's potential is realized.

Our Core Values

	We believe reading improves lives.
	We are committed to our valued customers and partners.
	We cultivate and celebrate our inclusive, engaged staff.
	We are champions for equity.
	We are passionate about literacy and lifelong learning.
	We are a safe and welcoming space for all.
	We are responsible stewards of public resources.
	We are ready to serve.

DMPL Strategic Plan

The Des Moines Public Library announced our new strategic plan in 2021, which will be used to guide the library over the next three years. Included in this plan was a new Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and the release of the DMPL's Core Values.

The strategic plan also announced the library's four core commitment areas, which you'll find referenced throughout this annual report:

COMMUNITY

- How we connect with those we serve, including cardholders, non-cardholders, nonprofit organizations, the business community, and more.

CULTURE

- How we become a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization where people and ideas thrive.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- How we create safe welcoming spaces – both virtually and physically – and how we ensure we are delivering materials and technologies relevant to the communities we serve.

CORE OPERATIONS

- How we provide tools, resources, materials, and information that best serve our diverse communities.

When the COVID-19 pandemic closed the library in March 2020, it became much more difficult to connect with families who use our spaces, programs, and resources. The library immediately placed more emphasis on community outreach to fill this hole, expanding our relationships with valued community partners. This continued even when the library reopened its doors. A few of our community highlights:

Día del Niño

Día del Niño is an important holiday for the Latinx community, and in April 2021 we partnered with Knock and Drop Iowa and others to host an outdoor celebration for families at Birdland Park. More than 500 people attended the event, where they received library learning bags, walked a bilingual storywalk, took home healthy snacks, and much more.

“It was something different and embracing to do in April, getting ready to welcome summer on a positive note,” said Zuli Garcia, director of Knock and Drop Iowa. Día del Niño “is a celebration in other countries, and many folks grew up celebrating it.”

Rotary Rosie Reader Van

The Rotary Club of Des Moines awarded the library a \$40,000 grant to purchase a van to expand community outreach efforts and increase the reach of the library. Library outreach staff use the Rotary Rosie Reader Van to bring resources, especially focusing on early literacy, out into the community. Librarians visit schools to deliver books, host storytimes, and share information about our Summer Reading program and other literacy initiatives.



More Community Partnerships

This year we partnered with both Connigo Early Childhood Education Center and Mundo Pequeño to build stronger relationships with the local Latinx community. Several of our libraries provided a curated deposit collection of books for the centers throughout the year. In April of 2021 for Week of the Young Child, each child at both centers received a bilingual Simple Steps outreach activity kit with a bilingual book and related hands-on learning materials such as scarves, maracas, crayons, markers, and paper.



Simple Steps Early Literacy Program

In the beginning of 2021, 42 early childhood educators completed a five-week training on the library's Simple Steps early literacy program for DHS continuing education credits. Each received a special Simple Steps backpack of supplies and resources to use in their classroom.

We partnered with EveryStep to provide Simple Steps materials for their case managers to bring into the homes of clients. In addition, 15 bilingual Simple Steps Early Literacy Kits are now available to borrow from the library.

Spark Foundation and DMPL's All Summer Long

The Des Moines Public Library partnered with Akil Clark at the Spark Foundation to provide early access to the DMPL All Summer Long summer reading program. This included 627 students at Monroe, Moulton, River Woods, McKinley, and South Union Elementary schools — all schools with low reading proficiency scores. Each of these children received a free book when they signed up to help build their personal libraries.

CULTURE



Becoming a more diverse, equitable organization was a key initiative of the Des Moines Public Library's strategic plan. New Deputy Director Emanuel Sinclair Mitchell created the library's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee as a way to address issues and obstacles faced by patrons and staff. The committee helped organize the annual staff in-service day and spent time looking over policies and procedures to find potential disparities and come up with ways to help address barriers to service.

In November 2020, the library implemented a Fine-Free policy for kid's and teen items. The library removed overdue fines and stopped collecting previously accrued fines on those items as well. As a result, nearly 2,000 patrons were able to use their library card again. The library also reduced late fees on adult materials.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way customers interacted with the Des Moines Public Library, and we found success with new initiatives and innovations during this unprecedented time. Among the highlights:



Book Chat

When buildings closed down in 2020, our librarians created our popular Book Chat service as a way to continue offering expert book suggestions and reading recommendations for our users. By filling out a simple online form, patrons received personalized book lists. One of Book Chat's great advantages is that it utilizes librarians from across the system. They can share their knowledge of different genres, providing lots of great ideas for book recommendations. Even after our buildings reopened, Book Chat became a permanent library service.



Programming

When library buildings were closed and a pandemic was raging through the state, in-person programs, a foundation of public libraries, become almost impossible. But our library staff made quick changes to ensure we still provided entertaining, educational programming throughout the pandemic.

Programming moved to the virtual space early on in the pandemic, including shifting our 2021 Authors Visiting in Des Moines (AViD) series to Zoom. Programming also moved into Des Moines city parks throughout the summer, offering storytimes, arts and crafts, and more. Staying engaged with programming throughout our Summer Reading initiative was even more important after the pandemic affected school-year learning for children.

We also shifted resources and staff time to creating library learning bags for families, full of supplies and instructions to complete literacy and other activities at home. These bags flew off shelves and became a key component of our programming strategy to stay engaged with our users while COVID case numbers fluctuated and in-person programming stayed on a break.

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Digital Cards

Prior to the pandemic, anyone who wanted a library card had to sign up in person at one of our six library branches. But soon after COVID-19 temporarily shut down our buildings in March 2020, we began offering digital library cards. With a digital card, new users could sign up for a card online and receive access to the library's books, digital resources, streaming services, and more. Not only could we reach new users at a time we were closed, but digital cards also have remained an important tactic for creating new users since the library reopened.

By creating a digital card, we reduced barriers to gaining a card and made it easier for people to immediately enjoy the benefits of the library. This helped grow active users by as much as 30 percent over the course of 2021.

CORE OPERATIONS

When the pandemic started, our digital services and tools were the only way patrons could access the library. As demand for eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming services, and more increased, our Technical Services department quickly reallocated its budget to buy more digital books and offer new digital services.

Today, annual digital spending remains \$50,000 above pre-pandemic levels. This has allowed for increased flexibility in responding to demand. When a book becomes popular due to becoming a selection for a popular book club or a film adaption, we can quickly purchase eBook and eAudiobook copies for immediate circulation. Physical books must be shipped and catalogued before hitting shelves, so flexibility allows patrons to read popular titles more quickly.

DIGITAL SERVICES (eBOOKS AND eAUDIOBOOKS):

Pre-Pandemic (FY 2019)

\$285,943	37,989	169,627
Expenditures	Total Materials	Total Checkouts

This Year (FY 2021)

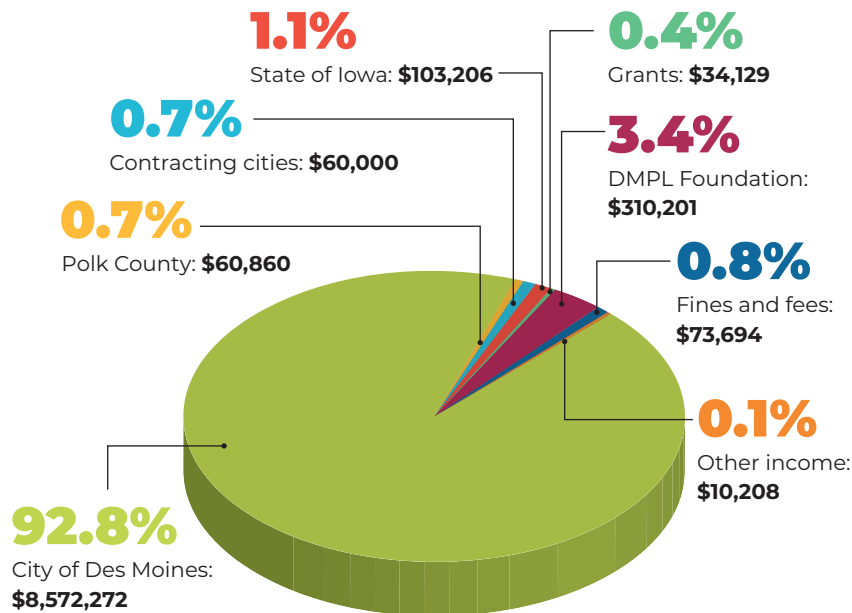
\$318,064	56,447	268,991
Expenditures	Total Materials	Total Checkouts

Percentage Increase

11.2%	48.6%	58.6%
Expenditures	Total Materials	Total Checkouts

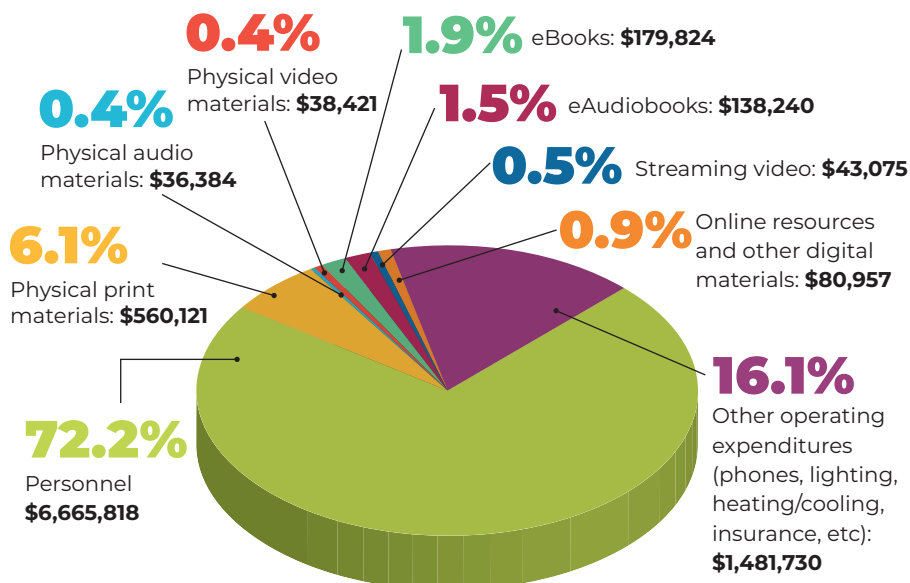
Funding Sources

Total: \$9,224,570



Expenditures

Total: \$9,224,570



CIRCULATION

Total circulation (print + digital)

1,120,903

Digital database use

141,138

Physical books checked out

582,098

Physical audiobooks plus
CDs checked out

47,751

DVDs checked out

43,919

eBook downloads

140,388

eAudiobook downloads

128,603

eMagazine downloads

26,744

COLLECTIONS

Physical materials expenditures

\$634,926

All digital materials expenditures

\$442,096

Materials expenditures per capita

\$4.98

New physical books added

42,874

New physical audio and
video materials added

3,416

Total physical materials held

458,824

Total digital materials held

56,447

Total digital databases offered

29

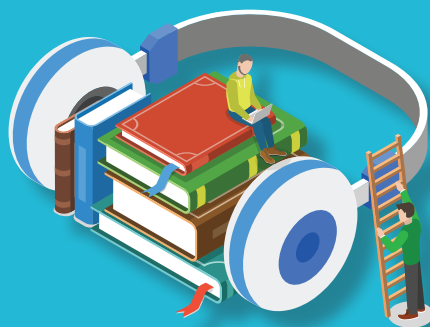


eBook circulation

**60.1%
increase**

eAudiobook
circulation

**56.7%
increase**



Website visits

1,285,123



Wireless
internet sessions

18,307



Unique Libby app users

15,389

On average,
there was an
eBook or
eAudiobook
checked out
**30 times
every
hour**
of the fiscal year



Use of public
computers

25,877

Reference
transactions

93,501



LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

Susan A. Woody, Director

Emanuel Sinclair Mitchell, Deputy Director

Jennifer Tormey, Supervising Librarian, Technical Services

Tim Paluch, Marketing & Communications Supervisor

Ashley Molzen, Community Engagement Supervisor

Jon Hobbs, Supervising Librarian, Central Library

Alicia Mangin, Senior Librarian, Central Library

Michelle Abrahamson, Senior Librarian, East Side Library

Brooke Santillan, Senior Librarian, Forest Avenue Library

Nikki Hayter, Supervising Librarian, Franklin Avenue Library

Paige Knotts, Senior Librarian, Franklin Avenue Library

Katherine Young, Senior Librarian, North Side Library

Brenda Hall, Senior Librarian, South Side Library

Jon Choda, Building Maintenance Supervisor

DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Library Board of Trustees is comprised of five central Iowans who volunteer their personal time throughout the year. Members are appointed by the Mayor of Des Moines and approved by the Des Moines City Council. The autonomous board meets monthly to set policies and guide the library's administration.

TRUSTEES SERVING DURING FY 2020-2021:

Isobel Osius | President

Jennifer Fiihr | Vice President

Bob Mahaffey | Secretary

Wes Graham

Jule A. Thorsen

DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

The Des Moines Public Library Foundation supports and enriches the capabilities, resources, and services of the Des Moines Public Library system. The mission of the Des Moines Public Library Foundation is to raise funds and advocate for the Des Moines Public Library. The DMPL Foundation has one full-time executive director and one half-time administrative assistant, plus a volunteer board of directors. For more information about the Des Moines Public Library Foundation and to find out how you can support the library with a donation, go to dmpl.org/foundation.