



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2027

HARRISON MEMORIAL LIBRARY ♥ PARK BRANCH CHILDREN'S LIBRARY
HENRY MEADE WILLIAMS LOCAL HISTORY DEPARTMENT

MISSION

To remain the heart of our community: Cherished by our village and a welcoming place for learning, enjoyment, and connection for everyone.



INTRODUCTION

Since the adoption of our last Strategic Plan, the Library and the community have weathered an extraordinary chapter in history. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, including the closure of Harrison Memorial Library and Park Branch Library for over a year and a sharp reduction in services and staffing.

Yet even in the face of adversity, innovation thrived. This difficult period sparked out-of-the-box thinking that led to meaningful improvements—from expanded Teen Services and streamlined library processes to enhanced technology and an exciting increase in adult programming. These achievements reflect the resilience and creativity of our team and the unwavering support of our community.

Looking ahead, the 2025–2027 Strategic Plan builds on this momentum. It embraces continued innovation while recognizing the practical realities of implementation. The plan is thoughtfully designed to ensure progress and continuity throughout the much-anticipated Harrison Memorial Library Renovation—an ambitious and vital project made possible by the generous support of the City of Carmel and the Carmel Public Library Foundation.

CARMEL PUBLIC LIBRARIES AT A GLANCE

SUPPORT & FUNDING

The Library is fortunate to have multiple sources of support and funding that work together to meet the community's needs.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Oversight of buildings, budget, & policies



FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Raises funds to support operations

CITY OF CARMEL

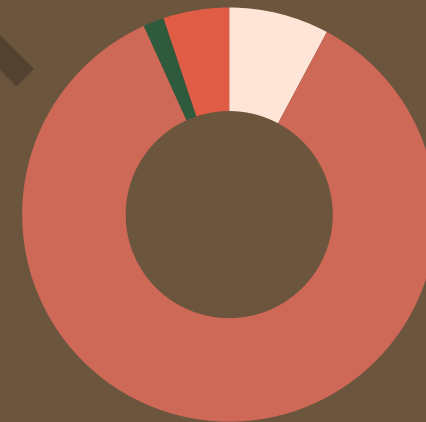
Funds staff salaries and building maintenance

CARMEL PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION
Raises funds to support operations

BUDGET

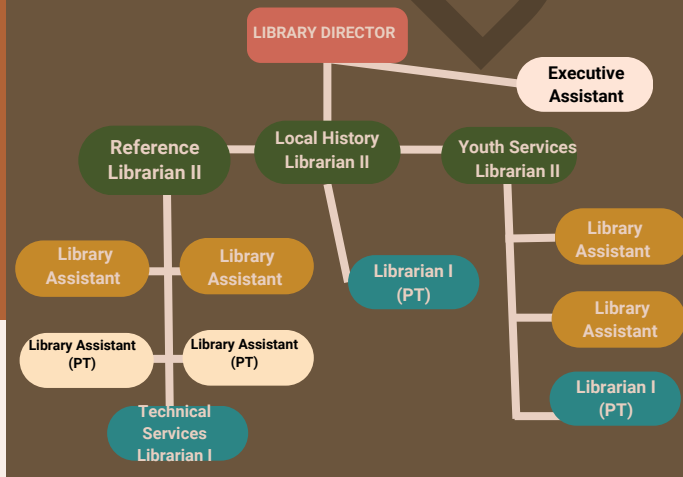
FY 2024/25 Total Income \$428,500

- Interest (LAIF)
- Carmel Public Library Foundation
- Operations (printing, lost books, etc.)
- Friends of the Library

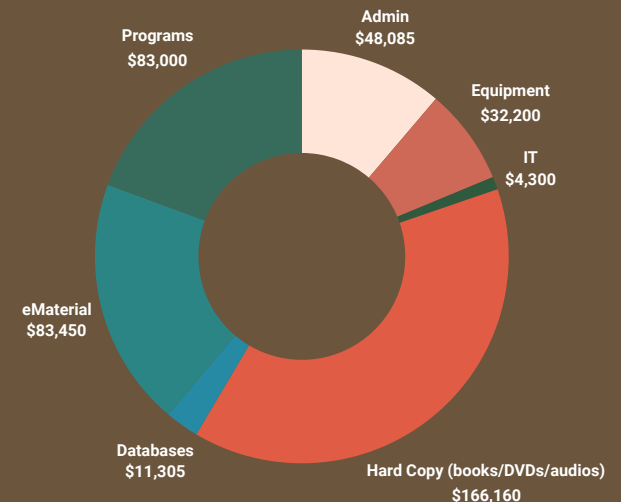


In addition to the generous contributions from library supporters, the City of Carmel funds library staff salaries. For FY 2024/25 the City approved 13.75 FTEs in the amount of \$1,545,431

LIBRARY ORGANIZATION CHART



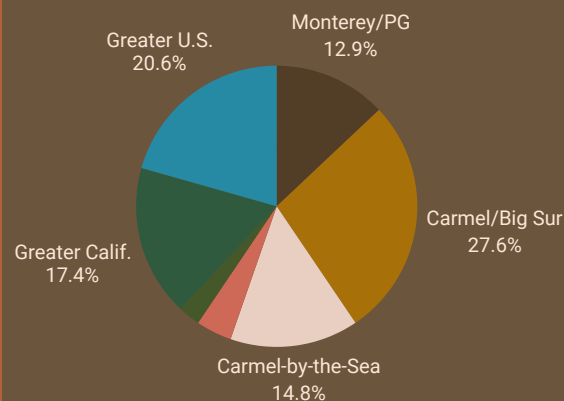
FY 2024/25 Total Expenditures \$428,500



CARMEL PUBLIC LIBRARIES AT A GLANCE

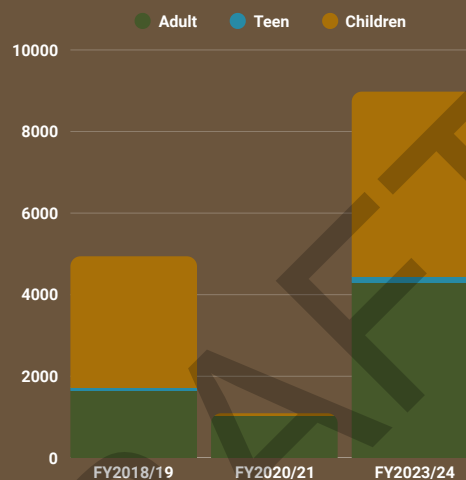
PATRONS

14,191 Total Cardholders (2024)



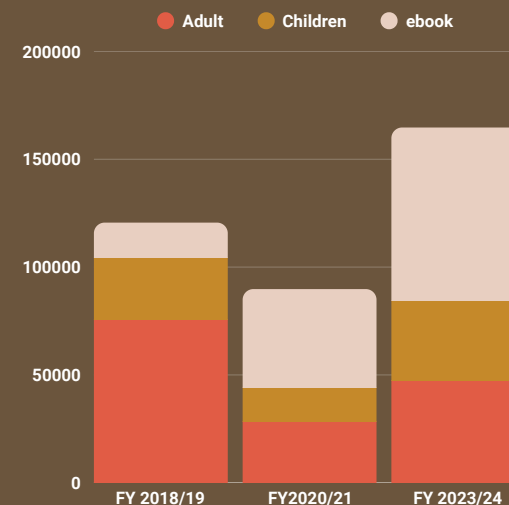
Carmel has an interesting make-up of users - the majority of whom are local. Many second homeowners from all over the world use our library while they are staying at their second home in town. The pandemic also saw an increase in online cards.

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



Programs at both libraries include a wide-range from music, to storytime, to art, history, and informational workshops. The number of programs since the pandemic has increased and thusly program attendance.

CHECK-OUTS



The pandemic caused a large jump in ebook usage among our patrons - in particular e-audios for adults. Kids checkouts exceed pre-pandemic levels due to an influx of new families and a revamped collection.

LIBRARY VISITS

FY 2018/19 **114,059**

FY 2020/21 **0**

FY 2023/24 **134,067**

People visit and use the library for many reason: books, DVDs, audios, programs, work, bathrooms, explore the building, look at the art, ask many questions, hang out, do a puzzle, attend a meeting, and much more!

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers help with shelving and special projects in Local History or the Children's department.

FY 2018/19 **964 hours**

FY 2020/21 **0 hours**

FY 2023/24 **352 hours**



HARRISON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

HISTORY ♥

Carmel Public Free Library was founded in 1906 at the corner of Lincoln Street and Sixth Avenue, where the Gathering Place is today, with a collection of under 500 books. The growing community of avid readers soon outgrew the building, and it was moved and expanded in 1922.

Ella Reid Harrison was a philanthropist, world traveler, great reader, and the widow of California Supreme Court Justice Ralph Chandler Harrison. In 1922, Mrs. Harrison bequeathed property, building funds, and her private book and art collections to the City to establish a public library in memory of her husband.

In 1928, the new Harrison Memorial Library, built by M. J. Murphy with input from architect Bernard Maybeck, was completed. The new library was soon pressed for space, and in 1949 the building was expanded all the way back to Sixth Avenue. In the decades following the expansion, the building saw minor renovations and updates, including changes to the staff offices and the garden.

In 2020, construction was completed on the Gathering Place, a free community meeting room that had been on the Library's wish list since the 1950s.

SERVICES & ACTIVITIES ♥

The Harrison Memorial Library holds books and materials for adults and teens, hosts myriad programs, houses the technical services department (where all the books are processed) - and is home to the Gathering Place, a free meeting space for all of the community.

The Harrison also is an art gallery where much of the City's best art works are on display.

The Carmel-by-the-Sea Garden Club designed and maintains the beautiful, well loved garden at the front of the building.

PARK BRANCH LIBRARY

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY & HENRY MEADE WILLIAMS LOCAL HISTORY DEPARTMENT

HISTORY ♥

Formerly Crocker Bank, the Park Branch Library was purchased in 1988 by Mayor Eastwood as a solution to space issues at the Harrison, when all other solutions failed, including expansion and talk of moving the library to Sunset Center.

After major renovations, the new library opened in spring of 1989, with a large Children's Department, new staff offices and a dedicated Local History Department for the library's collection of historical documents, which had previously been stored in a variety of basements and closets.

In 1992 the Local History Department was dedicated in honor of Henry Meade Williams, a local bookshop owner, philanthropist and father of Lacy Buck Williams, a lifelong resident who has been dedicated to preserving the history of Carmel and instrumental to improving library services through her continued support.

SERVICES & ACTIVITIES ♥

The Park Branch Library houses the Local History Department, archive for the village's history which includes photos, letters, manuscripts and more.

In addition, it houses the Children's Department holds all of the children's books and materials, and hosts many fun programs and story times throughout the year.

In 2014 the Park Branch became home to the Administrative offices and the City's Community Activities Department.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

To work to fulfill the Library's mission while addressing key challenges, we will pursue four broad goals and associated strategies over the next few years:

Goal 1. Be a center for learning, enjoyment, community connection and support.

- Strategy 1.1 Provide interesting and informative programs for all ages
- Strategy 1.2 Broaden community impact by identifying community members' unique needs to shape Library services and exploring unmet needs in the community
- Strategy 1.3 Develop outreach programs to underserved communities
- Strategy 1.4 Share the library's story through outreach in the community

Goal 2. Innovate to support equitable and inclusive access

- Strategy 2.1 Improve and enhance the Library buildings to ensure they are best designed for use, and are welcoming and vibrant
- Strategy 2.2 Improve cohesion between the library buildings and their surrounding gardens/green spaces - that are by their nature extensions of the library
- Strategy 2.3 Align the days of hours and service with community needs
- Strategy 2.4 Invest in adaptive technologies based on patron needs

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

Goal 3. Maintain operational excellence

- Strategy 3.1 Optimize public resources
- Strategy 3.2 Staff feel empowered to provide exceptional services

Goal 4. Improve the Library's environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change

- Strategy 4.1 Improve environmental sustainability of Library operations
- Strategy 4.2 Increase Library's preparedness for emergencies
- Strategy 4.3 Provide the community with resources and programs on environmental sustainability and resilience
- Strategy 4.4 Support the community in increasing resilience during emergencies

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION		ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES
GOAL 1 ♥ Be a center for learning, enjoyment, community connection and support.	<u>Strategy 1.1</u> Provide interesting and informative programs for all ages	Objective 1.1.1 Establish regular weekly hours for tech help (2025) Objective 1.1.2 Collaborate with Carmel, Carmel Valley, Big Sur and Pebble Beach schools on programs on a regular basis and seek to better understand how we can help to support their respective strategic plans (2026, Ongoing) Objective 1.1.3 Continue to learn from and build on established programs and explore new program ideas as they arise (Ongoing)
	<u>Strategy 1.2</u> Broaden community impact by identifying community members' unique needs to shape Library services and exploring unmet needs in the community	Objective 1.2.2 Provide a variety of ways for community members to provide feedback - bulletin board, suggestion boxes, notebooks, and surveys (2025, Ongoing) Objective 1.2.1 Conduct Community Conversations and produce an updated Public Knowledge Report (2027)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION		ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES
GOAL 1 ♥ Be a center for learning, enjoyment, community connection and support.	<u>Strategy 1.3</u> Develop outreach programs to underserved communities	Objective 1.3.1 Better serve patrons with dementia and Alzheimer's and their caregivers through staff training, surveys, and collaborating on programs (2025) Objective 1.3.2 Start a conversation with the community workforce to understand their needs and wants (2026) Objective 1.3.3 Explore option for books delivery to homebound patrons, including a partnership with Carmel Foundation (2025) Objective 1.3.4 Develop an accommodation policy (2026)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION		ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES
GOAL 1 ♥ Be a center for learning, enjoyment, community connection and support.	Strategy 1.4 Share the library's story through outreach in the community	Objective 1.4.1 Re-brand the library so that it is clear who we are, where we are, and what we do (2025) Objective 1.4.2 Develop a plan and strategy for marketing and communication of library services including, but not limited to social media, website, utilizing ads/columns in the Carmel Pine Cone, etc. (2026) Objective 1.4.3 Conduct outreach to community leaders to ensure understanding of the value of the Library and the importance of continued investment and support of Library services (Ongoing) Objective 1.4.4 Work with local realtors to distribute a welcome packet/brochure/bookmark for new community members (2027) Objective 1.4.5 Encourage community advocacy for the library (Ongoing)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION	ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES
GOAL 2 ♥ Innovate to support equitable and inclusive access	Objective 2.1.1 Look for opportunities to renovate both library buildings and ensure that the community has the opportunity to participate in and provide input at every phase of any design process for both the Harrison Memorial Library and Park Branch libraries (2025) Objective 2.1.2 Ensure continuity of operations during any renovation projects by relocating and prioritizing services and collections based on community needs and desires (2026-2027)
	Objective 2.2.1 Introduce patrons and visitors to the library in the Harrison Library garden with improved signage and explore the possibility of a garden information booth (2026) Objective 2.2.2 Conduct nature-centric programs utilizing the Harrison Memorial Library garden and other greenspaces in Carmel-by-the-Sea (2027)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION		ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES
GOAL 2 ♥ Innovate to support equitable and inclusive access	Strategy 2.3 Align the days of hours and service with community needs	Objective 2.3.1 Restore Saturday hours (2025)
	Strategy 2.4 Invest in adaptive technologies based on patron needs (2026)	Objective 2.4.1 Continue to invest in Wonderbook, large print and audio collections, and explore options for a braille collection.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION		ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES
GOAL 3 ♥ Maintain operational excellence	Strategy 3.1 Optimize public resources	Objective 3.1.1 Review, reaffirm, and amend library policies and procedures to ensure maximum transparency and efficiency (2025) Objective 3.1.2 Work with Pacific Grove and Monterey libraries to implement book/DVD sharing (2025) Objective 3.1.3 Work with the Carmel Public Library Foundation, Friends of the Library, and other community organizations to identify projects that could provide opportunities for special grant or donor funding (Ongoing) Objective 3.1.4 Better promote purchase suggestions on the library website, bookmarks, and any other promotional materials to further engage the community in collection development (2025)
	Strategy 3.2 Staff feel empowered to provide exceptional service	Objective 3.2.1 Develop staff training plan (1 all-staff training per month) including emergency preparedness (2025- Ongoing) Objective 3.2.2 Map the library's volunteer needs and map the needs of volunteers (2026)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION		ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES
GOAL 4 ♥ Improve the Library's environmental sustainability and resilience	<u>Strategy 4.1</u> Improve environmental sustainability of Library operations	Objective 4.1.1 Investigate ways to reduce waste in library operations (paper, single-use plastics, Bring Your Water Bottle to the Library, Craft Supply Exchange, etc.) (2025-2026)
		Objective 4.1.2 Look for opportunities to switch to local/sustainable/Certified B/etc. companies and vendors when possible (2025-2026)
		Objective 4.1.2 Work with Public Works to identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption in library buildings by strategizing lighting upgrades, window replacements as needed (Ongoing)
	<u>Strategy 4.2</u> Increase Library's preparedness for emergencies	Objective 4.2.1 Develop Continuity of Operations Plan for the Library (2025-2026)
		Objective 4.2.2 Create a special collections evacuation plan to improve the safety of our local history collections in case of an emergency (2025-2026)
		Objective 4.2.3 Prioritize staff training on disaster recovery topics, such as salvaging water-damaged materials (Ongoing)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION	ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES	
GOAL 4 ♥ Improve the Library's environmental sustainability and resilience	<u>Strategy 4.3</u> Provide the community with resources and programs on environmental sustainability and resilience	Objective 4.3.1 Regularly host sustainability and resilience related programs that are relevant to Carmel and responsive to our community's concerns and interests Objective 4.3.2 Provide opportunities for local and regional organizations, such as CERT, CalFire, Carmel Prepares; sharing info/offering platform for other orgs (CERT, County depts, C3E, Fire) and departments
	<u>Strategy 4.4</u> Increase the Library's resilience during emergencies	Objective 4.4.1 Continue to act as a charging/warming center during storms and power outages Objective 4.4.2 Explore additional ways we can support our community during emergencies and extreme weather events

PROGRAM IDEAS

We asked and you answered! Here are some ideas that were shared with us for specific programs that we are excited to try out in the upcoming years and some helpful feedback on library services:

Park Branch - Kids' Department

- STEM and coding classes/meet-ups
- Candy
- Bubble blowing
- Candy
- Rojigo to sing at the library (?)
- Make something cool like a robot
- Shell mosaic
- Chess club
- Making a roller coaster for gnomes
- Making an amusement park for kids
- Making tiny wooden gnomes
- You should have a Thanksgiving party
- Art classes
- Write books
- Have a book fair with lots of books
- Money
- Having a ball
- Have a rainbow party
- Events a bit later, not right after school

Harrison Memorial Library

- Gardening Program - Plant a tree
- Saturday hours
- Storm preparedness talk (evacuation centers, emergency shelters, hotel discounts for storm evacuees)
- Microsoft Word on computers
- Q&A with City Council
- Technology and eBook help
- Have the "Isle of the Lost" series
- Check out board games and games
- Mindfulness yoga
- Emergency preparation tips
- Game night
- Scam us if you can: Stopping mail, check and marketplace fraud program
- Have a book club here! Salsa dancing lessons
- Calligraphy class
- No cops allowed
- Get to know the Police
- Open mic nights
- "What's New at the Library" section in the Carmel Pine Cone
- Chinese knot making program - please continue your wonderful music program (P.S. the Bazar Magazine)
- Writers discussing their books
- Writing notes of appreciation to military
- Have a knitting program and do D&D more often!
- Continued smiles from the library staff
- More live music
- Local author visits
- Presentations from local non-profits
- Fingernail art
- More arts and crafts programs
- Weaving books
- Outreach
- Tai Chi and Qi Gong Classes
- Sunday and Saturday hours
- Kindness Camp

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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