

2023 IMPACT REPORT



Building Bridges, Creating Opportunities



2023 was a great year for Allegheny County libraries, as we are starting to see more and more people coming back into our buildings and enjoying the wide variety of services that our libraries provide. This year brought back more programming, more events, and more opportunities to connect with our neighbors. These connections will make us all stronger.

At the Allegheny County Library Association (ACLA), we strive to build bridges between our services and the libraries to ensure that the opportunities we create are meaningful and will help to meet the needs of those we serve. Our goal is to meet the people where they are so that library services throughout Allegheny County can be used by all.

ACLA provides services like the Student Library Card program, which puts Allegheny County library cards into the hands of all students in participating school districts; the Baby Bag program, which provides new parents with information on the importance of literacy from birth and beyond; and StoryWalks, which provide opportunities to read stories together outside of the library. Each of these, and many more, provides our communities with ways for families to experience the wonderful work that our libraries do in new and exciting ways.

The Social Workers in Libraries program is another service ACLA provides to our libraries, which pairs social work students from the University of Pittsburgh with local libraries through a fellowship program. Programs like these help ACLA to help our libraries meet the needs of patrons that need them the most and they build the bridges between community need and the resources available.

Creating opportunities for our communities is another essential element of the work that ACLA member libraries do every day. From assisting with job searches and educational tools to help people find their new career, to providing a safe place for children and teenagers to engage with their peers through after school programs and story times, our libraries are bringing new opportunities

to strengthen our communities. Libraries provide opportunities to engage, learn, and grow through programming for all ages, helping to build community among the citizens of Allegheny County. We all need these opportunities to interact with the world and ACLA and our member libraries want to bring these opportunities to the people.

2023 also found ACLA working with our friends at the Allegheny Regional Asset District to create opportunities for our libraries serving distressed communities throughout Allegheny County. The RAD Transformative Community Libraries Fund helped five of our libraries fund much needed, transformative, projects that will take these libraries into the future and allow them to create amazing new opportunities for their communities in a variety of ways. RAD's generous grants, totaling just nearly \$4 million, will help make these libraries move into the future and provide more services than ever before to their communities, and we could not be more grateful for their support.

As we move forward, ACLA is excited to continue building new bridges to link the amazing work our libraries do to the new innovations that we are constantly seeking. Our goal is to always create new opportunities for all the citizens of Allegheny County so that our communities will grow and thrive. Whether you use the library to check out the latest thriller novel, to learn a new skill, or to engage with your neighbors, we at ACLA hope that you continue to think of the library as an important part of your community and allow us to help you build new bridges and create opportunities in your own lives.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amy Anderson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Amy Anderson
CEO
Allegheny County Library Association

The Numbers are Growing!

Allegheny County libraries continue to serve as a trusted source for residents to learn and explore. Last year, activity increased as libraries continued to evolve and provide additional services and resources for our patrons. Here is a sampling of the numbers.



2,954,330 electronic materials circulated throughout the ACLA libraries, a **5.3%** increase.



Total circulation of all resources equaled **11,589,691**, a **4.2%** increase.



Overall visits to the member libraries totaled **4,219,762**, a **10.9%** increase.



Libraries offered **35,215** programs, a **25.8%** increase, and attendance soared to **676,107**, a **28.4%** increase.



Free Wi-Fi remains popular with **1,296,008** logins, a **29%** increase, and **58,346,646** minutes, a **4.9%** increase.



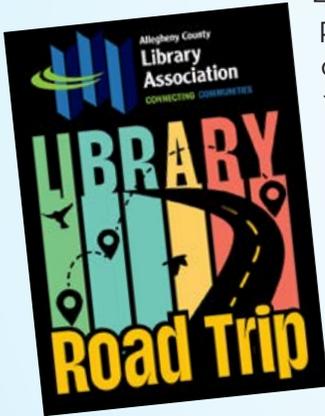
Patrons utilized **569,038** computer logins and **26,381,952** computer minutes, a **15%** increase.



Who's up for a Road Trip?

In 2023, ACLA launched the Library Road Trip program, which challenges Allegheny County residents to visit as many libraries as possible. Allegheny County is home to

45 libraries outside of the City of Pittsburgh and each one offers a variety of materials, programs, and services to their respective communities.



The rules are simple. Visit any suburban Allegheny County library to pick up your library passport. While you are there, get a stamp for your first library and then plan to visit some or all the others! Participants receive prizes for every library visited, if they complete a region and visit all libraries in the county.



Put Your Talents to Work

ACLA and its member libraries could not provide a high level of service and programming without strong leadership and representation on our local library boards.

While librarians and library staff are the faces you see behind the reference desk and at storytime every week, library boards provide the strategic vision that is crucial for their library's long-term success. Our library boards, and the volunteer committees they create, are in a unique position to serve their communities, and it is essential that library leadership reflects the richness and diversity of those communities.

To help in this front, ACLA created The Talent Bank, a program where local libraries can identify, connect with, and engage interested and talented community members who want to contribute to their local library.

We continue to search for library lovers who want to make a difference and encourage others to lend their talents to our community libraries.

Transforming Libraries

The Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD) is the largest single funder of libraries in Allegheny County, **providing nearly \$39 million in 2023 alone.**

In addition, RAD initiated the RAD Transformative Community Library Fund, which **granted \$3.8 million to five transformative projects** for libraries serving communities in the Mon Valley including:

- **Braddock Carnegie Library** – \$1,250,000 toward repair and re-construction of the exterior masonry and vestibule in America's first Carnegie Library
- **Carnegie Free Library of Swissvale** – \$800,000 toward a major capital project to make the library fully accessible for the first time
- **Carnegie Library of McKeesport** – \$750,000 as a part of a phased-in renovation to turn the uppermost floor from storage space to public space for community groups
- **Clairton Public Library** – \$500,000 to help move the library to new, purpose-built space on the ground floor of the newly-renovated Clairton Inn Apartments
- **Carnegie Library of Homestead** – \$500,000 toward a major capital project to make the historic library building more accessible and increase programming space

ACLA and its members appreciate the foundational commitment and support from RAD and their desire to continue to invest in our community libraries.



The Wheels are Turning

ACLA's Mobile Library Services direct library services have become an essential tool in reaching the unserved and underserved communities within Allegheny County. Through a fleet of bookmobiles, ACLA delivers resources to various community organizations, preschools, senior centers and special needs adult facilities.

In 2023, the ACLA Bookmobiles traveled 17,449 miles. The preschool and senior facility routes, which are funded by RAD, traveled 10,570 miles throughout the county, visiting 63 preschool classrooms and 53 stops at senior living facilities. The community route visited 5 stops in Allegheny County funded by communities, libraries, and community members.

The bookmobile staff worked diligently to reach these patrons and were able to increase the number of visits by 15.6% and individuals served by 24.5% over the previous year.

ACLA Youth Services Programs

Educating our youth remains a priority for ACLA and its member libraries. ACLA's Youth Services continues to expand its services and programming for children to learn and explore. Opportunities inside and outside of the library and classroom offer unique educational adventures and resources. Below are some of the Youth Services highlights from 2023.

“And the Winner is . . .

The Children's Choice Awards (CCA) hosted annually by ACLA and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) celebrate reading and encourage school and public library collaboration.

Students in grades 3-6 are encouraged to read three titles to attend the culminating event, resulting in nearly 400 students from across the county.

Throughout the months of March and April, students voted online for their favorite book. 2023's CCA winning title was *The Boy Who Failed Dodgeball* by Jordan Sonnenblick.

In addition to the CCA, ACLA also hosts the Picture Book Children's Choice Awards for students in grades K-2. As with the CCA, the students vote on their favorite title and 2023's winner was *Bathe the Cat* by Alice B. McGinty.



Partnering with Schools

Students with access to the public library are more likely to succeed in school, develop a lifelong love of reading and continue to use the library into adulthood. However, not every student has a library card.

To remove barriers, ACLA has initiated a program over the last several years and provided more than 45,000 students in 15 school districts across Allegheny County with library cards. These students have access to all materials provided by the public library with no limitations and are also fine free.

Participating libraries saw an increase in circulation and eResources usage and provided some rave reviews.

“These library cards have made a monumentally positive impact in improving the learning experience of our student body, and I can only express my greatest support for the continued development of the program.

- Annie McGaughey,
Keystone Oaks High School Librarian



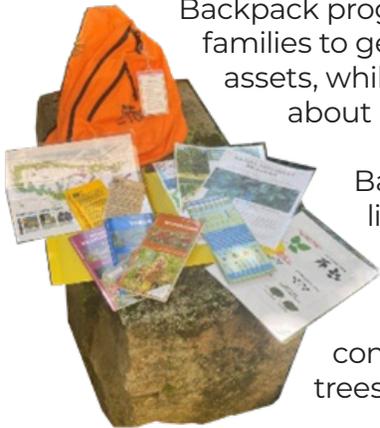


ACLA is on TV

ACLA's Youth Services program has continued its partnership with KDKA's Pittsburgh Today Live (PTL) to highlight the many non-traditional resources and programs available to children and their families. Each month, the segment showcases a different topic featuring ACLA and its member libraries, along with a book of the month and activity sheet. A schedule and previous episodes of Books & Beyond can be seen by visiting www.aclavirtuallearningprograms.org.

Venture Out & Explore

ACLA continues to partner with Allegheny County Parks, Allegheny Land Trust and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy for the Nature Backpack program. The program encourages children and families to get outside and explore the region's natural assets, while allowing children to discover and learn about nearby nature within Western Pennsylvania.



Backpacks are located at 36 of the 46 county libraries and are searchable in the online catalog by keyword, "nature backpack". Bag themes include bugs, butterflies and pollinators, wetlands, birds, water conservation, plants and fungi, wildflowers, trees, geology, tracks and scat, and meadow.

The nature backpacks include field guides, tools for exploration and a folder of resources, including maps of local green spaces.

Literacy Excursion: Walk Through Stories

The StoryWalk® collection remains a popular and fun activity that encourage outdoor activity, literacy, and family engagement.

ACLA has created a lending collection of more than 40 StoryWalk® titles for libraries and schools to borrow. These programs offer a wonderful opportunity for libraries to collaborate with local greenspaces as well.





The Love Continues to Grow

ACLA and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) continued its annual Love Your Library campaign in September. The 46 libraries in Allegheny County raised a record-breaking \$1.31 million in charitable contributions, which was more than any previous year. Of this amount, more than \$852,000, the largest amount of eligible funds ever raised, qualified for a prorated match from a generous \$200,000 match pool contributed by the Jack Buncher Foundation.



Now in its eighth year, the Love Your Library campaign continues to raise money to support essential services provided by county libraries, including books and materials, support for job seekers, facility improvements, and much, much more. More than 8,100 donors contributed to the campaign, including nearly 1,400 new supporters, which are also record-breaking numbers for the campaign.

Trusted Partners

ACLA and its member libraries appreciate the continued support and commitment from our partners. Their investments and resources provide a significant impact on our communities.

- Achieva
- Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- Allegheny County Parks
- Allegheny Intermediate Unit
- Allegheny Land Trust
- Casa San Jose
- Children's Museum of Pittsburgh
- Fred Rogers Institute
- Homeless Children's Education Fund
- KDKA-TV
- Kids Plus Pediatrics
- League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh
- Library Juice Academy
- Millie's Homemade Ice Cream
- OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates
- PAAR (Pittsburgh Action Against Rape)
- Remake Learning
- Senator John Heinz History Center
- Spark Books
- University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
- VoteRiders
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Community Support Services 2023

In 2023, ACLA Community Support Services was launched to build upon the achievements and growing demand for our Social Work in Libraries Fellowship program. This year, 11 Social Work in Libraries Fellows were deployed across the county, offering personalized assistance, resources, referrals, and ongoing support. Collectively, these Fellows engaged in 1,785 interactions with patrons, addressing a wide range of needs.

Beyond individual patron assistance, student fellows played a crucial role in supporting library staff, providing educational initiatives, and organizing special programs. Several students identified and responded to community needs by spearheading outreach campaigns and leading community-based projects. Each student contributed to strengthening community bonds, forging partnerships, and raising awareness about the diverse services and resources available through our libraries.

Participating libraries in 2023 were Andrew Carnegie Free Library, Baldwin Borough Public Library, Braddock Carnegie Library, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (Allegheny, Downtown, East Liberty, Hill District, and Main branches,) Dormont Public Library, Sharpsburg Community Library, and Wilksburg Public Library.

Due to ever-increasing interest in the program, a goal of expansion to 20 library locations has been set for 2024. Affiliation agreements have been signed with two additional universities. Alongside our ongoing partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, we are excited to welcome students from PennWest California and Penn State Greater Allegheny in the upcoming year.



SWIL Fellowship Special Project Highlights:

- Free children's book distribution
- Community and family engagement events
- After-school tutoring and mentoring sessions
- English as an Additional Language Learning Kits
- Wellness and stress relief activities for staff and patrons
- Community focus groups and community needs assessments
- Weekly food bag distributions for unhoused patrons and other neighbors in need
- Programming and events for children, seniors, recent citizens, and LGBTQ+ identifying patrons



A Solid Foundation

ACLA and its member libraries are gracious for the continued support from our trusted foundations to provide project-specific contributions. These community investments allow for essential services and resources for all Allegheny County residents.

Pittsburgh Foundation (Wish Book)

\$28,000 (2022-2023)

Funding for Baby Bags

\$5,500 (2023-2024)

Funding for StoryWalks®

Grable Foundation

\$76,500 (2022-2024)

Funding for one year of Books & Beyond and two years of Baby Bags and student library cards

Hillman Foundation

\$150,000 (2021-2023)

Established a full-time social work program coordinator position, and funding for student stipends for two years

Eden Hall

\$117,000 (2022-2025)

Continued funding for student stipends and funded two years of salary for ACLA's Social Work Program Coordinator position

\$40,000 (2022-2024)

Supplemental funding for administration of the RAD Transformative Community Libraries Fund and training opportunities for grant-eligible libraries

Government

PA Department of Economic and Community Development, Keystone Communities program

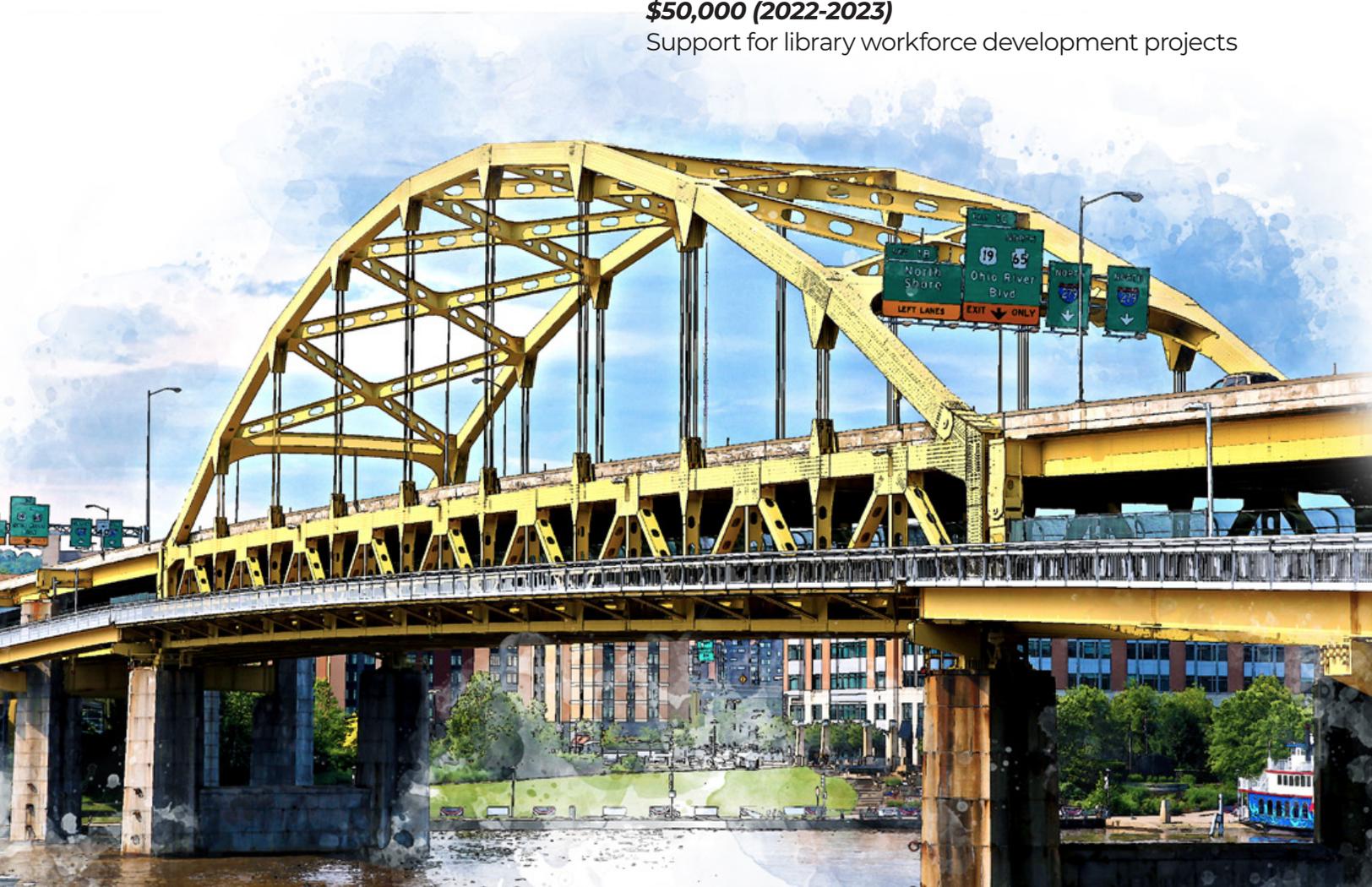
\$137,568 (2022-2024)

Capital improvements for library facilities to make them more accessible

PA Department of Education

\$50,000 (2022-2023)

Support for library workforce development projects



Our Library Investments

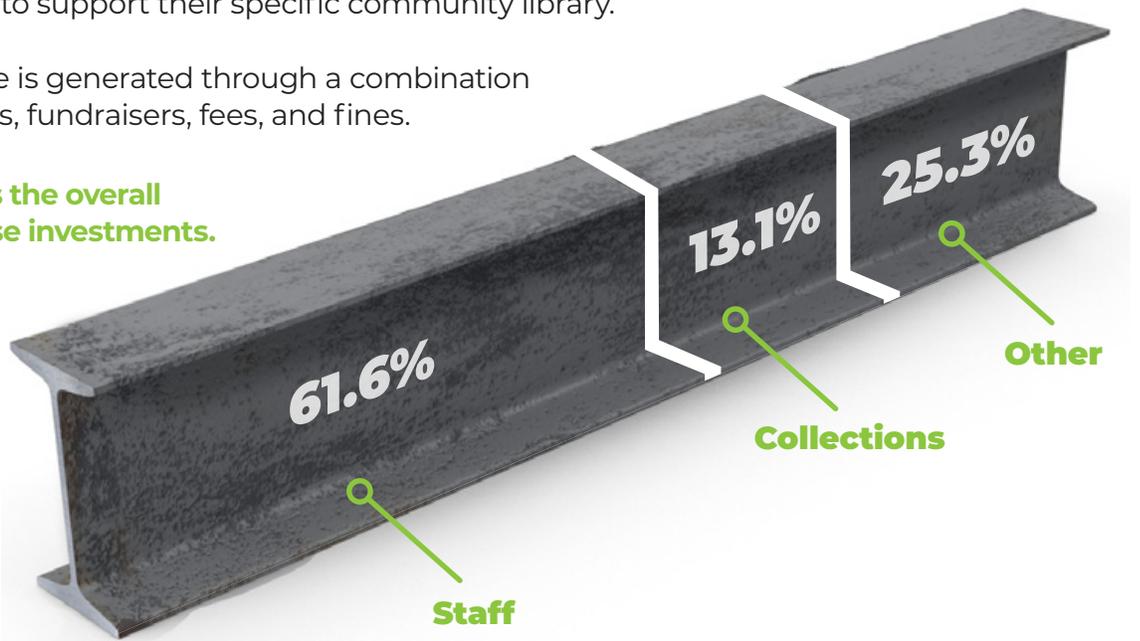
ACLA, its 46 member libraries, and the Mobile Library Services rely on revenue from several critical sources. These funds ensure our local libraries provide the essential resources and programming to Allegheny County residents.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides an annual subsidy to public libraries through the Department of Education's Office of Commonwealth Libraries. Funding is secured through a portion of table gaming revenues from the local casino.

The Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD) provides ACLA with a substantial investment by committing one-third of its total allocation to library services, while municipalities and school districts throughout the county also provide necessary funding to support their specific community library.

Other local revenue is generated through a combination of donations, grants, fundraisers, fees, and fines.

The graph displays the overall breakdown of these investments.



2023 ACLA Board of Directors

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East Region Representative

Paul Wittman (*Vice President*)
South Region Representative

Amber Spells (*Treasurer*)
At Large Representative

Nicole Henline (*Secretary*)
Librarians Advisory Council
Representative

Russell Ayres
Central Region Representative

Aliya Khan
At Large Representative

Paul Kohberger
West Region Representative

Cynthia Potter
North Region Representative

F. Charles Spence
ARAD Representative



ACLA and its member libraries appreciate the enduring support of the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD).

aclalibraries.org

