



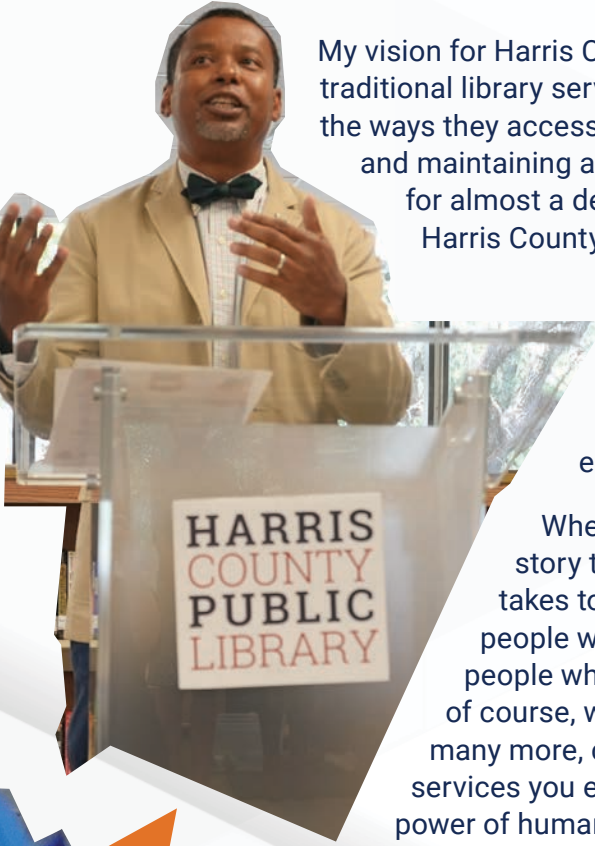
HARRIS
COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

2023
Annual Library
Impact Report





A Letter from the Director



My vision for Harris County Public Library is two fold. We will continue to offer our patrons the traditional library services they expect while adapting to meet their ever-evolving needs and the ways they access information and entertainment. HCPL has been committed to building and maintaining a world-class digital collection of eBooks and downloadable audiobooks for almost a decade. In 2023, our library ranked fifth in the world in digital circulation.

Harris County Public Library is also committed to expanding the idea of what a public library can and should be in the 21st century. We aim to provide programs and services that reach far beyond our walls with special emphasis on ensuring equitable access to information, education, and resources for all of the people we serve. From our expanded citizenship education initiative to our efforts to improve access to affordable childcare, we enrich lives to strengthen communities.

When most people think of libraries, they think of books and computers and story times. At Harris County Public Library, we think of people: the people it takes to select, catalog, and process the books that go on the shelves; the people who service and maintain the computers and the network they run on, the people who plan and perform those story times and all of our other programs; and, of course, we think of all the people who count on us to keep all those services, and many more, coming. Harris County Public Library is about all the materials and services you expect from your library, but above all, HCPL is about people and the power of human connection.

Harris County Public Library strives to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all people feel they belong: all races and ethnicities, all ages, all capabilities, all beliefs, all genders, and orientations. This library is for all people.

Of course, this includes you. We do what we do for you, but we never lose sight of the fact that we rely on your trust and support. I and everyone here at Harris County Public Library strive to earn it every day.

**Edward Melton,
Harris County Public Library, Executive Director**



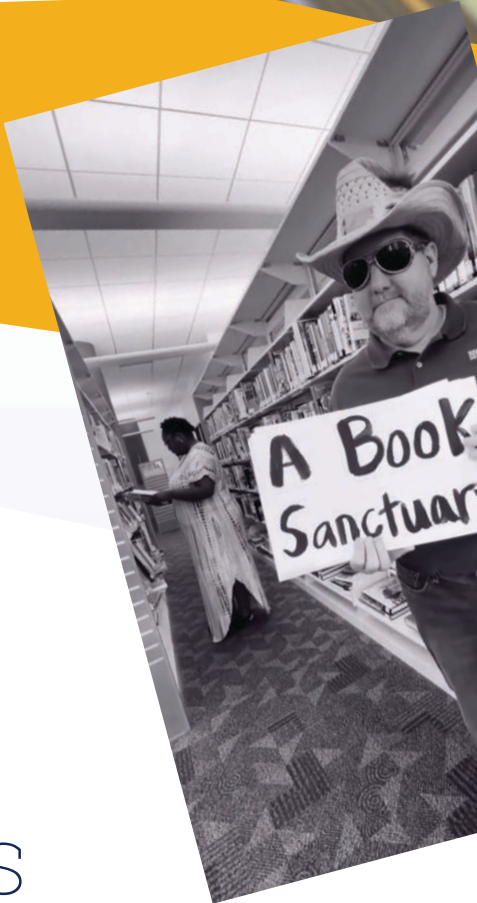
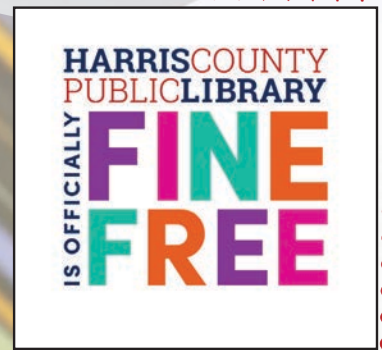
2023

Highlights:

In the summer of 2023 Former President Barack Obama joined Curbside Larry on a call to celebrate the Obama Foundation's Freedom to Read Campaign.

With unanimous support from Harris County Commissioners Court, HCPL joins a growing number of public library systems across the country that have eliminated late fees.

On September 19, 2023, Harris County Commissioners passed a resolution designating HCPL as a Book Sanctuary-protecting Texan's freedom to read



Mission:
Harris
County
Public
Library
enriches
lives to
strengthen
communities

Strategic Priorities:

Literacy and Learning: Inspiring learning through all stages of our lives.

Access: Providing opportunities to reach our potential

Sustainability: Caring for ourselves, our communities, and our planet.

Values:

HCPL is committed to these core values:

- We cultivate diversity and truthful communication, equitably offering our services.
- We champion a culture of intellectual freedom and curiosity, inspiring a lifelong love for knowledge.
- We embody mutual respect and dedicated service. We bring our best and share our talents.
- We enthusiastically engage with innovation, resourcefulness, creativity, and fun.





HCPL BY THE NUMBERS

4,835,125 Million
Population

27 Library Branches

2,421,360 Million
Annual Library Visits

13,496,318 Million
Total Circulation

2,116,017 Million
Card Holders

266,505
Computer Sessions

2,420,404 Million
Wi-Fi Sessions



PROGRAMMING

330,571

Program Attendees

324,659

In-Person Program Attendees

11,500

Programs Presented

2,282,501 Million items

in our Physical Collection

653,000 items

in our Digital Collection

Financial Report

\$38,217,345

FY 23 Adopted Budget

\$164,978

Donations & Gift Funds

417

Fulltime Employees



Program Highlights

Book Buddies

To help children develop their own internal motivation to read and stay on grade level, Harris County Public Library offers Book Buddies, a literacy enrichment program. By providing extra reading practice with a caring mentor, Book Buddies nurtures a lifelong love for reading and inspires children through positivity.

Adaptive Resources

HCPL is dedicated to empowering all library visitors, so they can get the most out of the experience. All HCPL locations provide adaptive resource kits for in-library use. These kits include Comfort Kits for individuals with neurocognitive needs, Vision Kits for those with vision impairments, and Memory Kits for those experiencing memory loss or caring for someone with memory loss. These kits offer mental and emotional stimulation and serve as conversation starters.

English Language Learning

English Language Learning Classes are for non-native speakers who want to improve their English speaking, reading, and writing skills. Classes are taught by trained volunteer tutors in a safe, welcoming library environment. They are free, and the library provides all materials.

Tournament of Books

The Tournament of Books is a competitive book club designed for teens in grades 9-12. Teams of 4 or 5 work together to read 12 books from a list provided by HCPL. Throughout the program, teams gather for motivational parties and discussions at their schools. The Tournament marks the end of the program, where teams compete by answering a variety of questions about the books, including plot, characters, and settings, as well as providing in-depth analysis and interpretation. Members of past winning teams have received prizes such as iPads and gift cards.

Summer Reading Program

HCPL, like libraries across the country, addresses the "summer slide" through engaging, educational programming at all branches. Additionally, incentive prizes are offered to motivate individuals of all ages, from infants to seniors, to track their reading through the summer. During Summer Reading 2023, HCPL patrons logged nearly 280,000 books and accumulated 2.8 million minutes of reading.

Family Place

Family Place Libraries and Save the Children Learning Centers provide fun and welcoming environments where children and their caregivers can play, learn, and grow together. Family learning centers are integral to HCPL's Growing Readers early literacy initiative. HCPL added five Family Place Libraries in 2023 bringing the total to seventeen family learning centers across the system.



growing readers
@hcpl

Strengthening Communities

HCPL continually adapts its programs and services to the ever-evolving needs of its communities. Our mission to strengthen communities stretches from helping improve the quality and accessibility of daycare services to making American dreams into American realities with our naturalization programs.

Citizenship Program

Citizenship Classes are taught by trained volunteer instructors. They are designed for adults preparing for the United States Naturalization Interview. Classes meet once or twice a week for 10-16 weeks, comprehensively covering all sections of the Civics Test and providing guidance for the citizenship interview. Classes are free, and the library provides all materials.

Sunrise Lofts

Sunrise Lofts is a Tejano Center residential facility serving youth 18-23 who have aged out of foster care. This location is only open to residents, staff, and volunteers, not the public.

Early Learning Quality Network-Local Network Organization

In collaboration with Harris County and Children at Risk, Harris County Public Library is spearheading a community-driven initiative aimed at enhancing quality standards in childcare facilities catering to children from infancy to age 8. We aim to improve early learning and childcare quality through collaboration with families, caregivers, and providers. Together, we aim to build a network of local organizations and community members focused on improving early childcare within the 77033 and 77379 zip codes.

Passport Services

Eight HCPL branches offer US passport application and renewal services, including passport photos. Applicants can make appointments online at hcpl.net/passports



Connecting People with Resources

HCPL is a crucial pipeline for information and resources. It not only offers free access to its own collections, but it also provides tools like ECF laptops and Enhanced+ library cards that allow Harris County residents to access other government and community services.

Emergency Connectivity Fund

In 2021 and 2022, HCPL applied for and received \$25.6 million and \$15.9 million in non-cash grants--the largest such grants awarded to a public library. These funds were earmarked to buy Wi-Fi hotspots and Chromebook laptops for Harris County residents who did not have reliable devices or home internet service. Beginning in early 2022 and continuing into 2023, HCPL collaborated with Harris County precincts and community partners to distribute 70,000 devices. These devices played a pivotal role in enabling children and adults alike to learn and work remotely.

Research By Mail

HCPL provides free library reference services for people incarcerated in Texas Department of Corrections facilities. Information professionals help inmates find legal resources and answer questions on housing, healthcare, and the transition into the workforce, among many other topics.

Enhanced+ Library Card

The Harris County Enhanced+ Library Card is a full-service library card and a verified photo ID. It can be used as a supplemental form of Photo ID. The Enhanced+ Library Card is not a replacement for the HCPL full-service Knowledge Card; rather, it serves as an additional option for library users who may benefit from an alternative form of photo ID. Library users of any age are eligible.

Juvenile Probation Outreach

In partnership with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD), HCPL provides library services to young men and women completing residential programs within the HCJPD system.

New User-Friendly Website

In April 2023, HCPL launched a new website with enhanced navigation menus to give one-click access to the services and information patrons use most. It features specially designed landing for adults, teens and kids rich with curated content for their audiences, The website's modular design allows related programs, services, collections and HCPL original content to work together promote discovery of everything the library has to offer.





Workforce Development

HCPL workforce development programs drive economic growth in our communities. The library provides a variety of tools that allow people to build better futures for themselves and their families.

Maker Central is HCPL's network of Innovation Labs, Digital Media Labs, and Maker Labs at HCPL locations. It gives the public free access to state-of-the-art equipment like 3D printers, laser cutters, CNC milling machines, digital recording and editing equipment, and much more. Maker Central locations offer orientation classes and programs for hobbyists, creatives, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

Adult learners earn an accredited high school diploma and career certificate online. In partnership with Smart Horizons **Career Online Education**, HCPL offers limited free scholarships to qualified adult learners.

Many HCPL locations offer **Basic Computer Training** for adults. Classes range from beginner level (using a mouse, setting up a free email account) to more advanced (Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace). HCPL staff present classes in branch computer labs. Some locations offer bilingual or Spanish courses.

HCPL is Committed to Inclusivity, Equity, Diversity and Access

To truly make Harris County Public Library a Library for All, we must examine the library as a whole to identify areas for improvement and then take appropriate action.

To that end, HCPL will form a committee for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) to help audit, recommend, and implement policies, practices, programs, and organizational behaviors that foster authentic inclusion, diversity, equity, and access within Harris County Public Library's services and programs. This work will position the organization for greater engagement with and impact on Harris County's diverse communities.

We aim to increase racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and ideological diversity across our partners, stakeholders, volunteers, Friends of the library, and interns while expanding our culture of equity, access, and inclusion within the organization.

Celebration Programs:

Black History

Women's History

**Asian American Pacific
Islander Heritage**

PRIDE

Hispanic Heritage

Native American Heritage

Disability Pride

HCPL CELEBRATES

**BLACK
History Month**

HCPL
CELEBRATES

**Native
American
Heritage Month**

HCPL CELEBRATES

**ASIAN
AMERICAN
PACIFIC
ISLANDER**

Heritage Month

HCPL CELEBRATES
**HISPANIC
HERITAGE
MONTH**

HCPL CELEBRATES

**Women's
HISTORY MONTH**



Bringing the Library to You

HCPL is a library without walls. Our Outreach Teams bring library services and education wherever Harris County residents gather with special attention to underserved communities.

The **Curiosity Cruisers** is a fleet of four “Super Libraries on Wheels.” HCPL staff visit schools, community centers, and special events to promote literacy and STEM education and to spark imagination. The Curiosity Cruisers are a partnership with the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation. Each child who visits gets to take home a free book of their choosing to help build their home library.

HCPL’s **Mobile Outreach Librarians** are a team of educators and library professionals who take the library message of lifelong learning to community centers and wherever Harris County residents gather. They offer everything from beginner computer and naturalization exam classes to Enhanced+ Library Card sign-up events.

The **Reading Express** is a mobile classroom that takes early literacy programming to children ages two months to 4 years. This mobile classroom is a dynamic and fun school on wheels. The curriculum is designed to develop phonological and print awareness, oral language, fine motor, and other early literacy skills through the exploration of books, nursery rhymes, songs, art, and play. It reaches high-need communities throughout Harris County and provides 45-minute interactive classes that are delivered weekly. Classes take place either on the bus or in community rooms in apartment complexes and other community-based venues. In partnership with Literacy NOW.



Environmental Programs

Beginning in 2023, HCPL has been working toward Sustainable Libraries Initiative certification. The library is striving to align its practices with the triple bottom line definition of sustainability: environmentally sound, economically feasible and socially equitable

Library of Things

Two HCPL branches loan various gardening tools with a library card for free. Tools range from work gloves and kneeling pads to shovels and wheelbarrows.

Recycling Program

When you hear the word sustainable, your mind probably immediately goes to things like recycling, reusable bags, electric cars, and solar panels. While those are all important things, becoming a sustainable organization is about much more than “being green,” it is about applying the triple bottom line definition of sustainability to how we operate and embracing practices that are environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible.

Seed Libraries

Several HCPL branches offer Seed Libraries for area gardeners. Users can borrow seeds from various plants free of charge. Once the plant has grown, users are encouraged to harvest some seeds to donate back to the library community to keep the cycle going.

Master Gardeners

HCPL partners with the Harris County Master Gardeners to offer monthly online programs for home gardeners. Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in bringing research-based horticulture information to the public. Past programs are available on HCPL’s YouTube Channel.





Support The Harris County Public Library

Join Us!



You know that you count on HCPL for the latest bestseller, free Wi-Fi, great programming, and more, but you probably don't know how much we count on you! Join the Harris County Friends of the Library Group!

HCFOL (Harris County Friends of the Library) is a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization established to support the activities of the Harris County Public Library System and to help ensure the best programming, equipment, and resources for the 27 branch libraries. We are made up of dedicated members who support and promote library programs and activities through fundraising, grants, and donations. We believe that the library enriches lives and strengthens the Harris County community through its innovative services.

Harris County Friends of the Library (HCFOL) supports literacy, programming, collection development, and organizational growth in the most heavily populated county in Texas. Some of the programs we support are the popular Summer Reading Program, Book Buddies, and Tournament of Books. We also provide grants to every HCPL branch and offer scholarships to HCPL employees pursuing a degree in library science.

Harris County Friends of the Library individual membership dues start at only \$25.

SUPPORT THE LIBRARY!

Annual Member

- A subscription to our quarterly digital newsletter
- Acknowledged as a member on our quarterly digital newsletter
- Invitations to our annual meeting and notices of special events

Bibliophile Member

- A subscription to our quarterly digital newsletter
- Recognized as a member on our quarterly digital newsletter
- Invitations to our annual meeting and notices of special events
- Book in your name

Book Collector

- A subscription to our quarterly digital newsletter
- Recognized as a member on our quarterly digital newsletter
- Invitations to our annual meeting and notices of special events
- Book in your name
- Priority notice for special events including Lunch with local Authors series

Precinct 1

Aldine Branch Library (ALD)
11331 Airline Drive
Houston, TX 77039
832-927-5410

High Meadows Branch
Library (HM)
4500 Aldine Mail Route
Houston, TX 77039
832-927-5540

HCPL Administration
Building
5749 South Loop East
Houston, TX 77033
713-274-6600

Fairbanks Branch Library
(FB)
7122 North Gessner Road
Houston, TX 77040
832-927-7890

North Channel Branch
Library (Ne)
15741 Wallisville Road
Houston, TX 77049
832-927-5550

West University Branch
Library (WU)
6108 Auden Street
Houston, TX 77089
832-927-5490

Precinct 2

Clear Lake City-County Freeman
Branch Library (FM)
16616 Diana Lane
Houston, TX 77062
832-927-5420

Evelyn Meador Branch Library (EV)
2400 North Meyer Avenue
Seabrook, TX 77586
832-927-5420

Galena Park Branch Library (GP)
1500 Keene Street
Galena Park TX 77547
832-927-5470

Jacinto City Branch Library (JC)
921 Akron Street
Jacinto City, TX 77029
832-927-5520

La Porte Branch Library (LAP)
600 South Broadway Street
La Porte, TX 77571
281-471-4022

South Houston Branch Library
(SHO)
607 Avenue A
South Houston, TX 77587
832-927-5530

Parker Williams Branch Library
(PW)
10851 Scarsdale Boulevard
Houston, TX 77089
832-927-7870

Precinct 3

Atascocita Branch Library (ATA)
19520 Pinehurst Trail Drive
Humble, TX 77346
832-927-5560

Baldwin Boettcher
Branch Library at Mercer Park (BB)
22306 Aldine Westfield Road
Humble, TX 77338
832-927-5480

Barbara Bush Branch Library (CC)
6817 Cypresswood Drive
Spring, TX 77379
832-927-7800

Crosby- Edith Fae Cook Cole
Branch Library (CY)
135 Hare Road
Crosby, TX 77532
832-927-7790

Kingwood Branch Library (KW)
4400 Bens View Lane
Kingwood, TX 77339
832-927-7830

Lone Star College- CyFair Library
(CYF) 9191 Barker-Cypress Road
Cypress, TX 77433 281-290-3210

Lone Star College- Tomball
Community Library (TOM)
30555 Tomball Parkway
Tomball, TX 77375
832-559-4200

Northwest Branch Library (NW)
11355 Regency Green Drive
Cypress, TX 77429
832-927-5460

Octavia Fields Branch Library (OF)
1503 South Houston Avenue
Humble, TX 77338
832-927-5500

Spring Branch Memorial
Branch Library (SM)
930 Corbindale Road
Houston, TX 77024
832-927-5510

Stratford Branch Library (STR)
509 Stratford Street
Highlands, TX 77562
832-927-5400

Precinct 4

Katherine Tyra Branch
Library at Bear Creek (BC)
16719 Clay Road
Houston, TX 77084
832-927-5590

Maud Smith Marks
Branch Library (MM)
1815 Westgreen Boulevard
Katy, TX 77450
832-927-7860

Katy Branch Library (KT)
5414 Franz Road
Katy, TX 77493
281-391-3509



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instant access to our digital content.



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