



Wake County
Public Libraries

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

I am filled with gratitude for the incredible support and engagement of our community. This annual report serves as an overview of a year marked by growth, innovation and connection, all of which have been made possible by you.

Throughout the year, we've enhanced our spaces to create welcoming environments where stories come alive and ideas flourish. We introduced new programs that inspired learning, expanded outreach to meet people where they are and strengthened partnerships that support health, well-being and digital access. Our libraries have continued to evolve as destinations for curiosity, creativity and belonging.

These achievements are more than milestones – they represent the countless moments of discovery and joy that happen every day in our libraries. Thank you for making our libraries a cornerstone of community life. Your enthusiasm and support inspire us to keep reaching higher.

We remain committed to offering dynamic programs, embracing technology and creating spaces that spark curiosity and foster lifelong learning. Together, we will continue to build a library system that strengthens community connections and opens doors to opportunity for all.

Here's to reflections of 2025 and another year of discovery **together** in 2026!

Warm regards,

Director, Wake County Public Libraries

Our **mission** is to instill the love of reading and to foster the pursuit of knowledge for the residents of Wake County.

Our **vision** is to be a vibrant, innovative public library system that serves as a destination to spark curiosity, foster learning and strengthen community connections. We aim to create dynamic spaces to empower individuals to grow and thrive, providing opportunity and belonging for all.



[WAKE.GOV/LIBRARIES](https://www.wake.gov/libraries)

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

It was a year of growth, innovation and community impact for Wake County Public Libraries. From expanding outreach services and revitalizing spaces to launching new programs and fostering meaningful partnerships, WCPL continued to strengthen its role as a cornerstone of learning and connection. Here are some of the key milestones that made 2025 unforgettable:

BOND LAND ACQUISITION

Wake County purchased two pieces of land for future libraries approved by the 2024 Library Bond Referendum. We now have banked land for the future Friendship Community Library in Apex and the replacement Southgate Community Library in Southeast Raleigh.

WEST REGIONAL LIBRARY RENOVATION AND REOPENING

Updates included improvements to the library layout, upgraded furniture, new carpeting and redesigned service desks as well as critical updates to the HVAC system and a new roof. The outdoor courtyard was redesigned to create seating and programming spaces and now features WiFi coverage. Staff warmly welcomed patrons back on Oct. 27.

1000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN

We launched our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program, tying into a nationwide reading challenge that encourages parents and caregivers to read 1000 books with their young children before they enter kindergarten.

LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS

WCPL collaborates with partners that support community health and well-being, lifelong learning and inclusive prosperity.

Cooperative Extension: Food Security

Libraries offered school-aged programming to bring awareness to hunger in Wake County. We collected and donated 1,779 pounds of food to local organizations.

American Heart Association: Blood Pressure Monitor Kits

High blood pressure, the “silent killer,” often has no symptoms and leads to heart disease and stroke – the top U.S. cause of death. Blood pressure monitors in libraries make it easy for customers to check their numbers regularly. The program began with 36 blood pressure monitors for checkout that circulated 186 times. In 2026, 90 monitors will be added to the collection.

Drinking Gourd Gallery: Libraries on Canvas

WCPL hosted six art exhibits featuring lectures, creative community activities and performances. The exhibit series highlighted artists whose work explored identity, mental health and resilience.

Wake County Legal Support Center: Lawyers in Your Library

Volunteer attorneys provide legal advice on family law matters: custody, divorce, adoption and housing discrimination for a free 30-minute, one-on-one legal session. The 114 sessions were presented with a market value of \$14,250 in six libraries and in 2026 will be expanded to all community and regional libraries.

DIGITAL LITERACY AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

WCPL received a Digital Champion grant from the North Carolina Department of Information Technology. This funding has allowed WCPL to hire a Digital Navigator who holds technology office hours at several libraries each week. The office hours support a variety of technology-related needs including job application and resume development, software use and navigating library computers as well as personal devices. The grant also funded accessible hardware, such as high contrast/large key keyboards and trackball mice in all libraries. In 2026, funding will continue to provide these services as well as Chromebook and hotspot lending at several locations.

“Our libraries are more than buildings filled with books, they are places where curiosity is sparked, ideas take root and communities grow stronger, a true destination for all.”

~ Tammy

NEW LIBRARY ON THE GO VEHICLE

We advanced our Library on the Go initiative with the launch of our first dedicated vehicle for senior outreach. By bringing books and programming to Meals on Wheels Friendship Cafes, we meet seniors where they are – reducing isolation, encouraging lifelong learning and building community. A new children’s bookmobile, nearing completion, will expand early literacy services in 2026.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

Virtual program offerings were expanded this year with the successful Outlander: Highlands to Carolina program series. Over 6,500 attendees participated in the exploration of the lore behind Diana Gabaldon’s beloved saga. Librarians designed and hosted this eight-part series, featuring historians, authors and a cast member. The series culminated in an evening with Gabaldon herself. In addition to the Outlander series, WCPL’s recorded virtual programs include presentations on personal finance, travel and memory care.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

We continue to expand our book collections offered in languages other than English. We now have nearly 24,000 books in eight additional languages.

LIBRARY CELEBRATIONS

These events garnered support and interest from staff past and present, elected officials and members of the community.

Richard B. Harrison Community Library 90th Anniversary

This library, founded by Librarian Mollie Huston Lee, was the first to serve the African American community in Wake County. On Nov. 9, staff hosted an event to honor the history of the library including the Mollie Huston Lee Special Collection, consisting of over 7,700 books that highlight the African American experience in the United States and the African diaspora.

Wendell Community Library 75th Anniversary

Established in 1950 by the Wendell Women’s Club, the library celebrated its anniversary on July 18. This location was the first library to provide continuous service beyond the city of Raleigh. Located at its current site since 1989, the library is slated for replacement with a larger, modern facility funded by the 2024 Bond Referendum.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY

Staff Day returned after a 13-year hiatus. Over 300 staff attended, and topics included artificial intelligence, public service, collection development and team-building. Keynote speaker, Shamichael Hallman, delivered an inspiring talk on strengthening and connecting community.



The new Library on the Go van is being used for outreach to seniors.



A new public art installation, designed by renowned North Carolina artist Thomas Sayre, is now featured at West Regional Library.



Library Director, Tammy, prepares for a special storytime at Richard B. Harrison Community Library.



Track your child’s progress in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program with our tracker.



Autumn, our outreach librarian, hosts Storytime at Dix Park.

2025 IN NUMBERS



OVER 285,000
ACTIVE CARDHOLDERS

OVER 12 MILLION
CHECKOUTS



OVER 8.6 MILLION
PRINT CHECKOUTS

OVER 3.4 MILLION
DIGITAL CHECKOUTS



OVER 3.1 MILLION
LIBRARY VISITS

OVER 2.1 MILLION
WEBSITE VISITS



OVER 11,000
VOLUNTEER HOURS

OVER 1,100 ENTRIES
IN THE INAUGURAL
BOOKMARK CONTEST



OVER 179,000 PUBLIC
COMPUTER HOURS USED

OVER 1.2 MILLION
WIFI HOURS USED



OVER 10,500
PROGRAMS PRESENTED

OVER 350,000
PROGRAM ATTENDEES



OVER 125,000 UDEMY
LECTURES COMPLETED

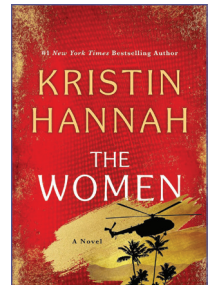
OVER 1,700
TUTOR.COM SESSIONS
COMPLETED



THE LIBRARY SYSTEM
BY THE NUMBERS

- 1 LIBRARY ON THE GO VEHICLE
- 2 SPECIALTY LIBRARIES
- 8 REGIONAL LIBRARIES
- 13 COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

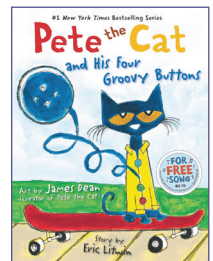
MOST POPULAR CHECKOUTS



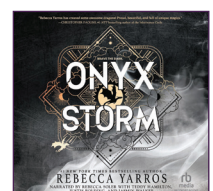
OVERALL TOP IN PRINT
AND TOP IN EBOOK



TOP YOUNG ADULT
IN PRINT



TOP PICTURE BOOK
IN PRINT



TOP IN EAUDIOBOOK