

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2025-JUNE 2026





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dear PFL Community,

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, municipalities, and community members, the Patten Free Library continues to be at the heart of the community. The municipal support from Arrowsic, Bath, Georgetown, West Bath, and Woolwich, help make the Library an accessible and welcoming space for all.

The 2025-2026 fiscal year was a year of growth and continued success. Library visits increased 21%, bringing more people in through our doors to experience all we have to offer. From books to programs to technology assistance and more, the Patten Free Library continues to provide excellent library services to the more than 15,500 residents in the communities we serve.

I am continually amazed by the support we receive. From businesses sponsoring events and in-kind donations, to individuals giving to the Annual Fund, this generosity allows the Library to continue to thrive. This year, we exceeded our Annual Fund goal, raising more than \$160,000 from over 480 generous supporters. These funds help the Library build and maintain a strong collection of new and core materials, offer engaging programs for all ages, provide timely technology resources and support, and so much more. We are deeply grateful to everyone who invests in the Library and helps make these services possible.

The Patten Free Library staff are at the heart of what makes our library special, and I cannot thank them enough for their outstanding service to our patrons. Every day, they offer book recommendations, answer questions, help patrons navigate library resources, and are there when they are needed most.

A library is more than books. It is a place where people learn, create, connect, and feel a sense of belonging. Thanks to your continued support, Patten Free Library remains at the heart of our community, enriching lives and creating opportunities for connection every day.

LESLEY DOLINGER

Patten Free Library Director

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Karen Richard

Lending Services

Stephanie Boyle-Nielson

Debra Burleson

Paula Price

Andrea Terry

Barbara West

Reference

Aurora Cobb

Laurel Cox

Sarah Maciejewski

New Summer Reading Shirts



Halloween Costume Parade



Library Giving Day



MISSION STATEMENT

Patten Free Library transforms lives, inspires lifelong learning, preserves local history, and builds community through joyful, creative exploration and dialogue.

By the Numbers: Where Our Community Comes Together

792



in person
programs
for all ages

112,848



physical
material
check outs

1,149



meeting room
& work pod
reservations

151,171



patron
visits

942

new library
cards issued



20,152

digital content
check outs



11,559

reference
transactions

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Children's Room - Mary Randall

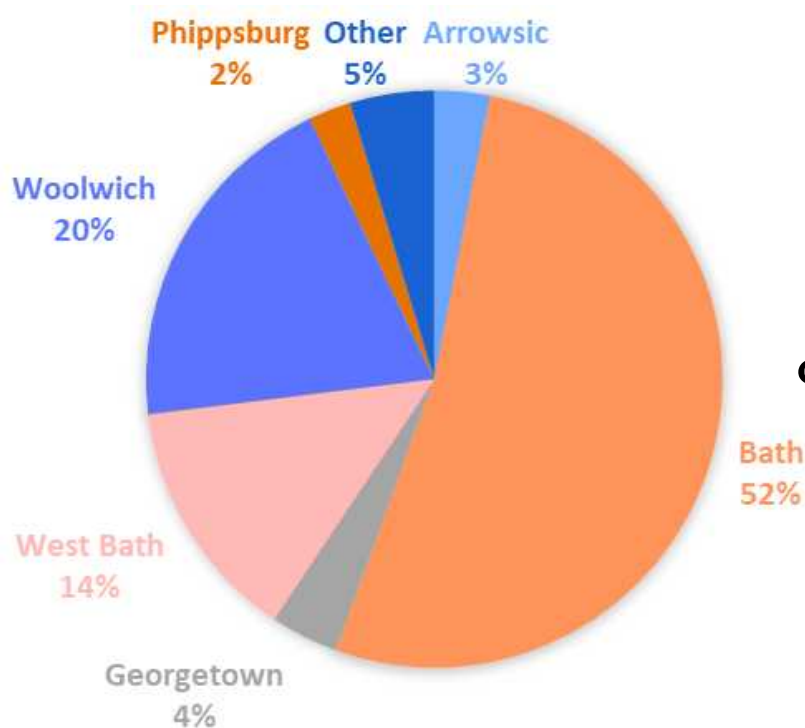
The children's department worked steadily on cleaning up our collection of children's titles. Our **circulation increased by 8.4%** - the kind of growth that looks a lot like kids walking out the door with stacks of books taller than they are. We are grateful for the robust reading culture our patrons facilitate and this year's jump in circulation numbers proves that.

Our patrons also showed their enthusiasm for participating in our 2025 summer reading program, Level Up! This much anticipated annual series of programs offered community members of all ages a chance to play and read. With reading tickets and bingo sheets to complete, our summer readers are given multiple opportunities to win themed-prizes along the way.



Abby's Book Club

2025 SUMMER READING PROGRAM



SIGN UPS

549

HOURS READ

3,479

COMPLETED BINGO SHEETS

134

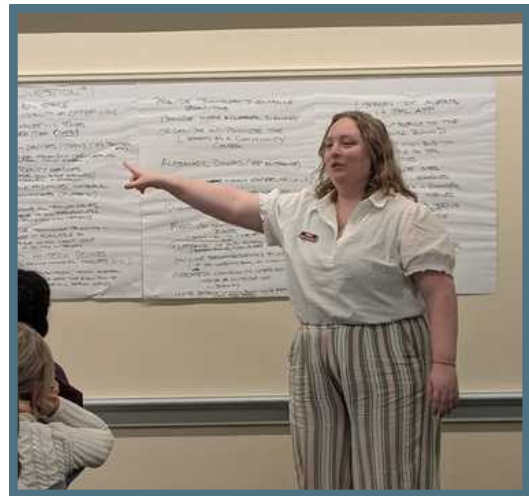
BLACKOUT BINGO SHEETS

75

Technology - Elizabeth Manning

October 22, Community Visioning Session, more than 60 people came together to Dream Big, Build Forward for the library's emerging technology plan. At this event, the first of its kind for the library, a lively and engaged representative group from all of our served communities helped us envision and lay plans for the library's technology future. They shared their boldest dreams and wildest ideas about the role of technology at the library in the future.

We have been using the ideas from this meeting to develop an organization-wide technology plan that will keep the Library responsive to our community's changing needs and ensure that our technology, spaces, and services remain accessible, relevant, and forward-looking.



Mary Randall highlighting themes from the attendees ideas.

Sagadahoc Genealogy and History Room - Jack Martin

The 2025–26 fiscal year in the Archives was a stable one, with trends generally holding from previous years: busier periods in the summer and fall and slower seasons in winter and spring. One continuing trend has been a decrease in genealogical inquiries and growing interest in house histories, largely fueled by new Bath residents who moved to the city post-pandemic.

One such couple, Gretchen Kinder and Jeff Cutler, were featured on an episode of the HGTV series *My Lottery Dream Home* and later purchased a house in Bath. After moving to the area, they visited the Archives to learn about the history of their new home and were delighted by their discoveries. This past year, HGTV asked them to film a “where are they now” follow-up segment, and we welcomed a film crew into the Archives to recreate their original visits and highlight resources they used to research their house, including the Sanborn Insurance Maps.

There has also been an influx of younger visitors to the Archives. Meg Barker brought Fisher Mitchell fifth-grade classes to visit in early spring, while three young library patrons expressed interest in becoming “Deputy Archivists.” We hope this trend continues as we work to break down historic barriers that have kept young people and other groups out of archival spaces.

A winter highlight was the continuation of the Town History Series, which once again proved successful and avoided any cancellations due to snow. We remain interested in revising the format to sustain the series, and the Art Committee has discussed pairing it with a display of historic artworks and an opening reception or gala with a keynote speaker.

The historic art collections also received much attention over the summer. A work placement student from the University of Aberdeen inventoried the collection for the first time since 2015, provided a draft policy for managing the library's art holdings, and built a PandaSuite app that can serve as a digital art guide, complete with audio, to replace our previous paper brochures. A digital format will allow the art to be rotated more frequently while also making the collections more accessible.

Outreach & Programming - Hannah Lackoff

Library of Things

We launched our new and improved *Library of Things*, offering patrons nearly **70 unique items and kits**: from telescopes and DVD players to lawn games and gardening sets. Last year we **added 24 items**, including a VHS/VCR player, hula hoops, and kombucha and sourdough starters.

By removing financial barriers and expanding access to tools for learning, recreation, and discovery, the Library of Things enriches lives and reflects our mission to meet the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of our community.



Parks and Museum Passes

We added three new passes to our *Museum & Parks Pass* collection, offering free or discounted access to local museums, parks, and attractions. New additions include the Chocolate Church Arts Center, Bath Skatepark, and Maine's First Ship, expanding opportunities for patrons to enjoy experiences they might not otherwise be able to afford.

The collection has seen a 129% increase in checkouts over last year, driven by both the new passes and increased promotion of the program. The Chocolate Church pass, in particular, has been in high demand, with passes often reserved immediately upon release.

By removing financial barriers and connecting patrons with cultural, recreational, and educational experiences, this program continues to expand what a library can offer its community.

Envision Resilience



The **2025 Envision Resilience Midcoast Maine Challenge** brought together university students, community stakeholders, and local practitioners to explore innovative solutions to challenges including affordable housing, stormwater management, local industry, and changing coastlines.

The resulting exhibition featured student designs for working waterfronts, public parks, and neighborhoods, and was on display throughout the library from March through August.

FRIENDS OF PATTEN FREE LIBRARY

We would like to thank all of the Friends for your generous support and ongoing dedication to the Patten Free Library. Because of their tireless efforts, our community enjoys improved library programs, new resources, and a welcoming community hub, which makes a difference in the lives of others by inspiring creativity and fostering lifelong learning. Our library would not be the vibrant hub that it is without the generosity of a caring community.

During FY25-26 the Friends of Patten Free Library hosted their annual Heritage Days book sale over the 4th of July weekend, and shifted their spring book sale to coincide with Bath's downtown Spring into Summer celebration. The Friends also participated in Bath's Citizens Involvement Day, the library's New Cardholder event, Starry Night, and Hygge day. One of the biggest contributions is the 100% volunteer run library bookstore on Front Street in Bath.



Pop up book sale at
Community Day



Hygge Day volunteers

FRIENDS INCOME

MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS

\$16,346

LIBRARY BOOKSTORE

\$51,889

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PRESIDENT OF TRUSTEES STATEMENT



Dear PFL Community,

As President of the Patten Free Library Board of Trustees, it is my privilege and pleasure to reflect on another remarkable year of growth, generosity, and community impact.

The Library continues to be one of the most valued public spaces in our region because it belongs to all of us. Every visit, every program attended, every book borrowed, and every donation made reflects a community that believes in lifelong learning, connection, and opportunity. This year, more people than ever chose the Library as a place to gather, discover, and belong.

On behalf of the Trustees, I extend my sincere gratitude to our municipal partners, donors, volunteers, Friends of the Library, businesses, and everyone else who invests their time, talents, and resources in Patten Free Library. Your generosity ensures that the Library remains welcoming, accessible, and responsive to the evolving needs of our communities. We are especially grateful to the individuals and families whose contributions helped the Annual Fund exceed its goal last year.

The Board is committed not only to supporting today's Library but also to preparing for tomorrow's. As we continue planning for the future through the *Build Our Future* campaign, we remain focused on preserving this historic institution while creating spaces and services that will serve generations to come. We take seriously our responsibility to steward the resources entrusted to us and to ensure that Patten Free Library remains a vibrant community cornerstone for the years ahead.

Thank you for believing in the mission of Patten Free Library and making its success possible. Together, we are ensuring that the library remains at the heart of it all - a place where our communities come together to learn, connect, and thrive, today and for generations to come.

KARL ALBRECHT

Board of Trustees President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karl Albrecht".

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*Trustees Michael, Anthony and Tommy
at a donor event in the Reading Room*

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The John Patten Society recognizes and celebrates individuals who have made a lasting commitment to Patten Free Library through planned giving or significant gifts to the Library's Endowment Fund.

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ENDOWMENT REPORT

The Patten Free Library Endowment provides a permanent source of support that helps ensure it remains a vibrant community resource for generations to come. While annual gifts sustain today's programs and services, the endowment helps secure tomorrow's opportunities by providing a reliable source of income to meet future needs and adapt to changing community priorities.

During fiscal year 2025–2026, the Library continued to strengthen its long-term financial foundation through gifts to the Endowment Fund and planned giving commitments from generous supporters. Every contribution, whether made today or through a future estate gift, helps preserve the Library's ability to provide free access to knowledge, technology, and welcoming community spaces.

ENDOWMENT VALUE (JUNE 30, 2026)

\$9,774,705

ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION

\$405,275

ADDITIONAL DRAW

\$63,100

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Mae's Cafe Maine Street Design
Maine's First Ship
Jack Martin
Laurie and Dana Martin
Janis McQuarrie
Dylan Metrano
Midcoast Youth Center and
Skatepark Mockingbird Bookshop
Mockingbird Bookshop
John Mosher
Debra Norton
Now You're Cooking Over the Moon
Patten Free Library Knitting Circle
Mary-Ellen Pecci
Helen Perille
Pitter Patter
Pomelia
Project Glimmer
Public Health Working Group
Ashleigh Randall
Reny's Department Store
Replay
Stephen Shaw
Hank and Victoria Simpson

Sisters Gourmet Deli
Skillin's Greenhouse
Smitty's Cinema
Soggy Dog Designs
Solo Pane e Pasticceria
Springer's Jeweler
Jim Stump
Susan Swan
Timothy and Lisa Swinburne
The Corner Bookshop
Daniel True
VentiCordi Chamber Music
Wendy Ulmer
Wild Oats Bakery
YMCA
Leah Zartarian



Trustees Peggy and Leah at Library Giving Day table at Shaws.



NEW Plant Swap, made possible by generous plant donations from our community

BUILD OUR FUTURE PROJECT

Funded by private donations and grants

Phase 1 *COMPLETE!*

Improving our building's sustainability and accesiblity.

Last fiscal year, we celebrated the completion of the first phase of our project: transforming the library into a more comfortable, accessible, and energy-efficient space for everyone. New heat pumps now provide reliable heating and cooling throughout the building, while LED lighting and solar panels are already helping significantly reduce our electricity costs. We also upgraded our handicap-accessible entrance, making it easier for all members of our community to access the library. Together, these improvements strengthen our building for the future while helping us operate more sustainably and responsibly.



Solar panels on the roof



Improved accessibility entrance

Phase 2 *COMING SOON!*

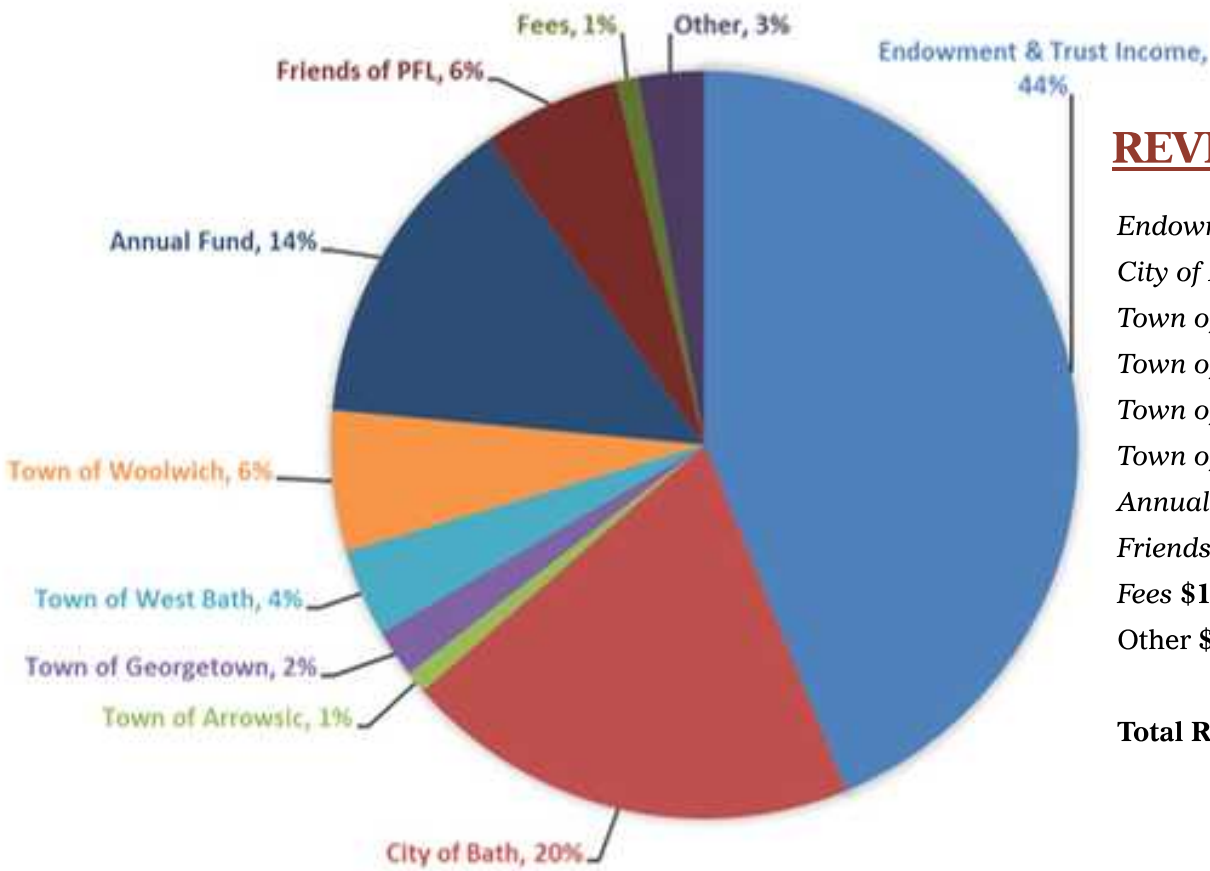
Renovating library spaces to meet the growing and changing needs of our community.

We are beginning to shift our focus to the *Reimagined Spaces* phase of the project, which will focus on improving access, functionality, and the overall user experience for both patrons and staff. We look forward to creating welcoming, flexible spaces that can support the many ways our community uses the library. From enhanced public areas to improved staff workspaces, *Reimagined Spaces* will help us create a library that is more accessible, comfortable, and adaptable for everyone who walks through our doors.

To learn more contact Lesley Dolinger, Director, at ldolinger@pattenfreelibrary.org

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

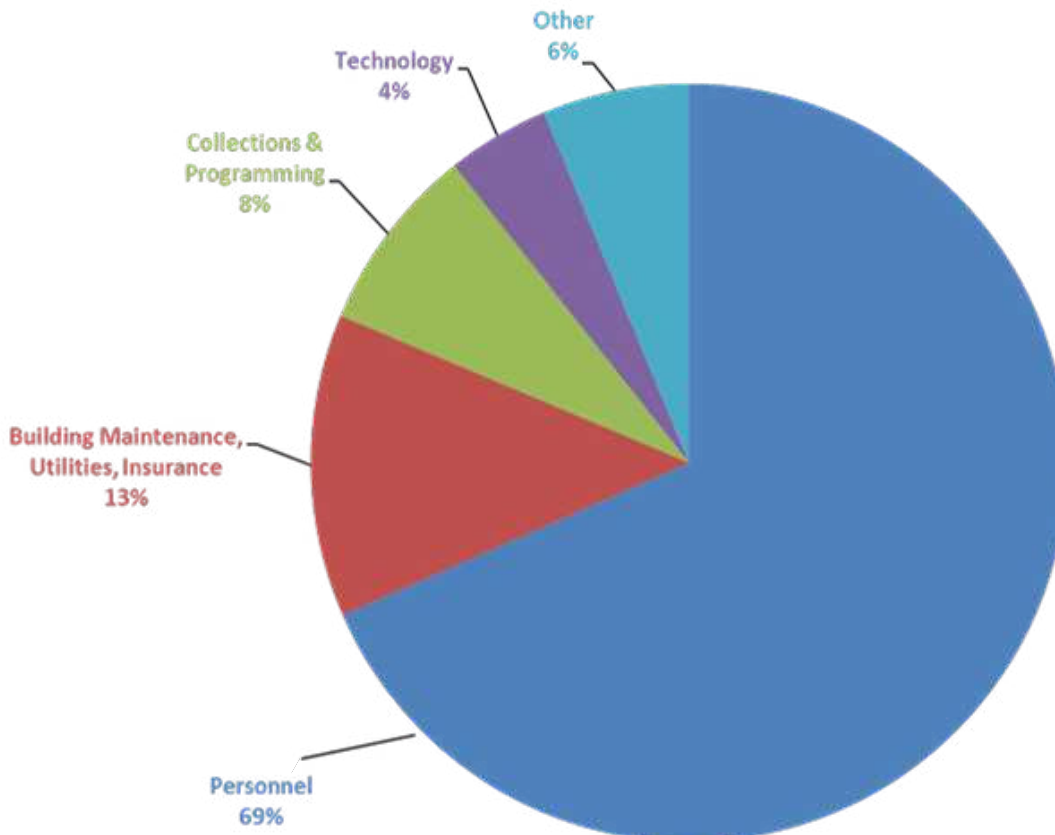
FINANCIAL STATEMENT



REVENUE

Endowment & Trust **\$514,855**
City of Bath **\$232,504**
Town of Arrowsic **\$11,118**
Town of Georgetown **\$24,659**
Town of West Bath **\$44,517**
Town of Woolwich **\$71,506**
Annual Fund **\$161,386**
Friends of PFL **\$70,334**
Fees **\$11,139**
Other **\$33,610**

Total Revenue \$1,175,628



EXPENSES

Personnel **\$761,323**
Building Maintenance, Utilities, & Insurance **\$138,178**
Collections & Programming **\$89,051**
Technology **\$48,811**
Other **\$69,763**

Total Expenses \$1,107,126



2025 Annual Writing Contest Winners

**PATTEN FREE LIBRARY
33 SUMMER STREET
BATH, ME 04530**

207-443-5141

pattenfreelibrary.org