



CARMEL CLAY
PUBLIC LIBRARY
2025 Annual Report

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Community. Lifelong learning. Literacy. Stories. Art. Expression. Freedom. These values resonate deeply with the people we serve. Nearly 65,000 residents in our well-educated city hold a library card, and many others have visited the library even if they don't yet have a card. Support for and engagement with the library are truly outstanding.

In 2025, the library engaged in strategic planning to chart the path for the next three years. As part of this work, we invited public input through an online survey. The results were striking: 96.6% of respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall. This mirrors findings from a professional survey conducted in 2017, in which 96% of respondents expressed the same high level of satisfaction with library services. Together, these results reveal a remarkably consistent and enduring appreciation for the library's work over time.

For anyone in our community that does not yet have a library card, and for those who have never even visited library locations, I invite you to reach out to me for a tour of the Main Library or the Joyce Winner West Branch. Our message to all residents is simple: this is your library, and we are here to help you unlock a lifelong journey of learning and discovery.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the dedicated and ultra-talented library staff. Thank you as well to the library Board of Trustees, to our Foundation and supporters, and to our loyal patrons.

Bob Swanay

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MISSION

To inspire lifelong discovery, facilitate collaboration, and connect people with resources.

VISION

To support a diverse community of people committed to lifelong learning, an enhanced quality of life, and enriching social and cultural experiences.

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

2,102,017

CHECKOUTS
(**32%** DIGITAL ITEMS)

572,253 LIBRARY VISITS

185,572

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

75,761

LIBRARY CARDHOLDERS

51,500

PEOPLE ATTENDED **1,791**
PROGRAMS & EVENTS

38,553 STUDY, MEETING,
& RECORDING ROOM USES

AN AVERAGE DAY AT THE CARMEL CLAY PUBLIC LIBRARY

4,092
PHYSICAL ITEMS
CHECKED OUT

1,846
DIGITAL ITEMS
CHECKED OUT

1,640
VISITORS TO THE
MAIN LIBRARY AND
WEST BRANCH

110
STUDY, MEETING,
AND RECORDING
ROOM RESERVATIONS

532
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED BY
LIBRARY STAFF

WEST BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The library undertook a significant building improvement project at the Joyce Winner West Branch to enhance the facility's long-term sustainability, accessibility, and patron experience. The project included repairs to the building's front facade and windows, upgrades to the heating and cooling systems, and the installation of an exterior 24/7 holds pickup locker. After a feasibility study, the project was expanded to include the installation of roof-top solar panels for better energy efficiency.

To complete these improvements, the branch was closed for five months beginning August 1. During that time, the branch's collection was transported to the Main Library so patrons could continue to access these materials. Branch staff also shifted to the Main Library, working with colleagues in the Youth Services, Teen Services, Adult Services, and Circulation Departments. Work continued through the end of the year in anticipation of a January 2026 reopening with a brief additional closure planned for early in the year to finalize the last phase of improvements.

The Joyce Winner West Branch remains a beloved community hub, welcoming more than 52,000 visitors and circulating over 84,000 items in 2024—numbers that underscore the importance of investing in the branch's continued success.

PATRON PERSPECTIVE

"I just want to say thank you and to let you know that every librarian I have encountered at [the West Branch] is beyond welcoming and excited to share all the library has to offer. I love libraries, and it is a delight to come to yours!" Anni

PATRON PERSPECTIVE

"I've studied at your tables, prepared for high-stakes meetings, and even taught my daughter the value of paying off an overdue book fine. I wrote my first book here. This isn't just a space with shelves—it's a place that's helped shape who I am. Please know how proud I am to say that Carmel Clay Public Library is my library. And I know I'm not the only one who feels that way." Jerold C.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2025, the library launched a focused strategic planning effort to ensure our services continue to reflect the community's evolving needs. With guidance from Fast Forward Libraries LLC, we gathered input from patrons, partners, Board members, and staff through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. These insights shaped fall workshop sessions where the Board and staff refined key priorities for the years ahead.

From this work, staff developed clear goals and measurable objectives to guide the next three years, with detailed timelines set for 2026. This new roadmap positions the library for meaningful growth, and staff are energized to bring these goals to life.

IMPROVING COLLECTIONS

LUCKY DAY COLLECTIONS

In 2025, the library continued to strengthen and refresh its collection, ensuring that patrons of all ages could discover materials that inspire, inform, and delight. One of the year's most popular additions was our new Lucky Day collection. This first come, first served selection of high demand adult fiction titles gives readers a surprise chance at landing the newest bestsellers without the wait.

YOUNG HOOSIER BOOK AWARDS

At the Joyce Winner West Branch, we expanded children's and teens' offerings with the addition of Young



PATRON PERSPECTIVE

“My favorite thing supported by my taxes is CCPL, every day.” Fern M.

Hoosier Book Award titles, a direct response to patron requests and a reflection of our commitment to supporting reading enthusiasm among young readers.

AUDIOVISUAL COLLECTION UPDATES

To improve browsing and help patrons find what they love more easily, staff at the Main Library completed a thoughtful reorganization of the DVD and Blu-ray collection. Feature films across formats were interfiled, and TV series received a newly designated section, creating a more intuitive experience for movie and television fans.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

Behind the scenes, staff undertook a major project to improve accuracy and access: a full inventory of the entire 280,000-item collection. Every item was scanned to confirm correct status, location, and cataloging information. This project ensures our electronic catalog is a precise reflection of what's on the shelf and helps patrons locate materials with confidence.

DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Meanwhile, demand for ebooks, downloadable audiobooks, and other digital formats continued to soar. Digital materials now account for one-third of all library checkouts, a testament to how strongly our community embraces convenient, tech-forward ways to read and explore.

Together, these efforts reflect a dynamic, responsive approach to collection development—one that blends innovation, careful stewardship, and a deep understanding of what our patrons value most.

PATRON PERSPECTIVE

“Thank you so much for putting together the craft kits for the children. My grandchildren were visiting from out of state over their spring break, and they just had the nicest time making wind chime kits.” Jane, West Branch patron





PATRON PERSPECTIVE

“I never thought I’d be homebound, but I am. Thank you so much [for the homebound service]. It’s a great escape from all the pain you’re feeling. If I didn’t have the books, I don’t know what I’d do.” A homebound services patron



EXPANDING SERVICES

OUTREACH TO MIDWEST ACADEMY

In 2025, the library continued its commitment to bringing services directly into the community through lobby stops, where staff visit senior communities with a selection of books to offer on site browsing, checkouts, and library card sign ups. This year, we expanded that outreach in a meaningful new direction by adding a monthly visit to Midwest Academy, a Carmel school serving grades 3-12 with ADD/ADHD, language-based learning differences, high-functioning autism, and processing challenges. Because the school lacks its own library, our visits bring books directly to students who might otherwise struggle to access them. The addition of Midwest Academy to our lobby stop schedule reflects our dedication to meeting patrons where they are and ensuring that every member of our community can experience the joy and opportunities that reading provides.

HOMEBOUND SERVICE

The library’s Homebound Service ensures continued access to materials for patrons who are unable to visit the library due to illness, disability, or other limiting circumstances. Eligible Carmel residents—whether living independently or in senior living facilities—receive a

monthly delivery of books, audiobooks, and other materials selected by staff based on their interests and requests.

In 2025, the library completed 532 homebound visits, reflecting our ongoing commitment to supporting lifelong learning and connection for all members of the community.

LIBRARY CARD REGISTRATION TRANSLATIONS

To support greater accessibility and meet the needs of our diverse community, the library expanded its card registration form into multiple languages in 2025. Patrons can now complete the form in Telugu, Arabic, Hindi, and Simplified Chinese, in addition to English and Spanish. This enhancement makes it easier than ever for new patrons to get connected to library services.

SEED LIBRARY

The Seed Library continues to be one of the library’s most popular offerings. Each spring, the library offers a selection of vegetable, herb, and flower seeds, assembled by teen volunteers and overseen by members of the Hamilton County Master Gardeners. Its popularity reflects more than a love of gardening; it shows how deeply our community values sustainability, creativity, and hands-on learning.

PATRON PERSPECTIVE

“If you’re working on almost any project and you’re not sure what to do, go to the library and talk to the people who work there. Their job is to provide opportunities and resources for free, so make sure to use those assets.” Lainey, local teen author and illustrator



BOOKS IN A BAG KITS

The library introduced a new, easy-to-use system for patrons to register for our Books in a Bag kits—ready made sets designed especially for book groups. Each kit includes 12 copies of a selected title along with a thoughtfully prepared discussion guide, making it simple for groups to dive into meaningful conversations. The improved registration process streamlines access to these popular kits, ensuring book clubs can spend less time coordinating and more time reading together.

DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

The Digital Media Lab expanded its creative capabilities with several exciting upgrades designed to give patrons even more ways to bring their ideas to life. The DML added new 3D printers along with a wider variety of filament options, opening the door to more detailed, durable, and imaginative 3D projects. A new sticker printer joined the lineup as well, offering a fun and customizable tool for personal projects, small business branding, school assignments, and more. To support growing interest in audio recording and podcasting, the DML also outfitted its Audio Rooms with upgraded, studio quality microphones, providing an improved experience for creators at every skill level.

TRAINING COMPUTERS

The library also invested in new all-in-one computers designed to make technology education more mobile and accessible. These systems allow staff to transform any meeting room into a temporary tech lab, giving patrons hands-on access to digital tools during classes, workshops, and training sessions. This flexibility ensures that technology learning can happen wherever it’s needed most and that the library can continue serving as a dynamic hub for digital skills development.

FOSTERING LIFELONG LEARNING

PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

The library continued to expand its role as a trusted resource by offering a wide range of programs that addressed real needs and strengthened local partnerships. Throughout the year, patrons benefited from informative and empowering sessions designed to support older adults and their caregivers. Programs such as Senior Fall Prevention, Medicare 101, Warning Signs of Alzheimer's, and Reading with Dementia, each reach new audiences. The library also proudly hosted and participated in the City of Carmel's Engagement Day for Seniors in October, bringing vital resources together under one roof for a day of learning, connection, and support.

PARTNERSHIPS

Many of these programs were made even stronger through collaboration with local organizations dedicated to community well-being. The library partnered with the Hamilton County Health Department, the Shepherd's Center of Hamilton County, Legal Aid of East Central Indiana, and the Hamilton County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Drop-Off Center to deliver expert-led sessions and services that patrons could trust. These partnerships allowed the library to bring specialized knowledge directly to the community, ensuring that residents have access to valuable information, guidance, and support close to home.

Together, these programs reflect a year defined by collaboration, responsiveness, and a shared commitment to serving the community's evolving needs.



PATRON PERSPECTIVE

“Thank you for all your help. I’m 92 years old and have lived all over the country, and you’re the gold standard—Carmel is the best library I’ve ever been to!” Dolly M.

NEXT CHAPTER BOOK CLUB

New in 2025, the library partnered with the Carmel Transition Program of Carmel Clay Schools to host the Next Chapter Book Club. This weekly gathering brings together adults with developmental disabilities to share the joy of reading in a warm, welcoming setting. Each meeting offers a chance to connect, build confidence, and enjoy stories together, creating a space where every participant can belong and celebrate the joy of books.

KIDS AREA EXHIBITS

The Main Library's Kids Area alcoves offered some truly captivating exhibits in 2025, each designed to spark curiosity and celebrate cultures from around the world. Working in partnership with Carmel's Sister City committees, the library showcased vibrant lanterns from around the world and charming storybook characters from global traditions, transforming the alcove spaces into miniature windows on international heritage. A third exhibit featured an eye-catching display of Chinese kites. To deepen engagement, a new digital screen beneath the alcoves provides kids and families with more information about the featured objects, along with curated lists of related books they could explore. Together, these beautiful, inspiring displays turned everyday visits into opportunities for discovery, connection, and imagination.



PATRON PERSPECTIVE

"I didn't know libraries could be this much fun!" A young patron to his caregiver as they left the library



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2025 OPERATING EXPENDITURES

Personnel	\$5,266,505
Library Materials & Databases	\$1,870,526
Other Services & Charges	\$748,010
Building Equipment & Maintenance	\$540,899
Supplies	\$281,428
Utilities	\$232,846
Programming Costs	\$117,345
Furniture & Equipment	\$76,963
Capital Improvements	\$28,061

2025 OPERATING REVENUE

Property Tax	\$4,832,309
Local Income Tax	\$4,377,580
Interest Earnings	\$1,128,315
Local Income Tax, Special Distribution License Excise Fee	\$718,367
Contributions	\$347,834
Fines & Fees	\$110,000
Other	\$38,193
	\$250,173



The Carmel Clay Public Library was the recipient of a 2025 Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association.

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