

# LIBRARY

## DESCRIPTION

The Henrico County Public Library (HCPL) provides informational, educational, and reading resources to residents of all ages. Library services include professional information staff who expertly answer customer questions, a comprehensive and timely materials collection, programming for children, teens, and adults, computer classes and digital media creation, book discussion groups, resources for job-seeking assistance, and more. The library provides mobile library services to daycare centers and retirement communities and participates in community outreach events. HCPL is known for its high standard of customer service, its responsive collection, and its attractive and well-equipped facilities.

The library offers in-person and online services through 748 public workstations, loanable laptops and wireless hotspots, and other devices embedded in libraries across the county. The library provides internet access, web-based Library Catalog searching, Microsoft Office software, digital media creation tools, and electronic information resources. Wifi is available at all public library locations. The Library catalog, ebook downloads, and research databases are available to access online, any time, from anywhere. HCPL is a resource for every resident, supporting and adapting to ever-evolving community needs.

## OBJECTIVES

- To provide customers with a positive library experience that meets their needs and expectations and that enriches community life.
- All libraries will be welcoming and engaging places that provide accessibility and an array of spaces to meet the community's growing needs.
- Residents will be offered a responsive, relevant and diverse collection that is available in a timely manner.
- Libraries will offer services and programs that reach out to Henrico County's changing population in ways that respond to diverse community needs.

## ANNUAL FISCAL PLAN SUMMARY

Description	FY24 Actual	FY25 Original	FY26 Approved	Change 25-26
Personnel	\$ 17,970,346	\$ 20,112,745	\$ 20,835,022	3.6%
Operation	4,507,288	4,769,211	4,769,211	0.0%
Capital	209,836	207,700	207,700	0.0%
Total	<u>\$ 22,687,470</u>	<u>\$ 25,089,656</u>	<u>\$ 25,811,933</u>	<u>2.9%</u>
Personnel Complement	227	227	227	-

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Change 25-26</b>
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Digital/E-Circulation	1,200,403	1,284,431	1,361,497	77,066
Library Cards Issued	20,237	20,844	21,469	625
Meeting Room Attendance	213,023	238,592	257,680	19,088
Physical/Print Circulation	2,474,825	2,549,070	2,600,051	50,981
Program Participation	143,093	154,540	162,267	7,727
Public Computer Sessions	182,574	191,703	199,371	7,668
Questions Answered	477,230	501,092	516,124	15,032
Total Circulation	3,675,228	3,785,485	3,899,049	113,564
Visits	1,419,633	1,476,418	1,520,711	44,293
Website Visits	3,846,150	4,038,458	4,199,996	161,538
WiFi Connections	3,184,674	3,534,988	3,888,487	353,499

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Department's budget for FY26 totals \$25,811,933 representing an increase of \$722,277, or 2.9% from the previously approved budget. This increase is solely reflected in the personnel component as operating and capital outlay remain flat from the previous fiscal year.

## DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

HCPL service to the public continues to grow and with strong support from the County and a dedicated community of readers, library staff have been able to provide innovative, inclusive, and attentive programming and public service that is receiving national recognition. The library is a valued and essential resource to residents and adds to their quality of life. HCPL is deepening engagement with the community and building on its solid foundation of excellence.

## STAFF AND FACILITIES

### Facility Upgrades

Existing space at North Park Branch was repurposed into a new 12-seat conference room with A/V teleconference capability. This added to HCPL's list of meeting spaces which are in high demand across the County. The large meeting room at North Park received new carpet, paint, tables, chairs, and updated A/V.

Meeting spaces at Tuckahoe Area Library were also refreshed. Five Study Rooms had wallpaper removed, were freshly painted, and received AV upgrades. The Tuckahoe Library Conference Room is being refurbished and the large meeting room is receiving new tables and chairs.

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A plan is underway to relocate the Heritage Wall at Libbie Mill from the stand-alone steel columns to a more versatile and cost-efficient wall-mounted version. Other Libbie Mill projects include the replacement of carpet and the addition of vinyl tiles to the lobby. Furniture repairs, including re-upholstering and replacement, continue across all sites.

### **Staff Development**

Twenty-five library staff are participating in the Leadership Henrico program. Seven are participating in the County's Emerging Leaders Certification Program, with three graduating this year. All are cultivating wider skillsets and networks that will benefit their careers, the library system, and Henrico County as a whole. Five people completed their Career Development Plan. This cross-training in multiple public service areas increases the strength of the library's workforce in serving the public.

Training and conferences for staff continue with additional support from the Friends of Henrico County Public Library. These included CARES Training for the Teen Services and Children's Management Committees provided by Henrico Area Mental Health and Developmental Services. A program on Suicide Prevention was also presented to HCPL's Leadership Team by Henrico Area Mental Health and Developmental Services. Training on services for the unhoused was provided by Homeward, an organization serving the unhoused in the greater Richmond region.

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## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### **Literacy, Youth, and Family Programs**

Helping to prepare young children for school is a core role of HCPL. During the past year, libraries hosted 2,140 storytimes to an audience of 55,890. In addition, 617 children participated in the *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten* reading challenge and 12 children completed the monumental goal of reading 1,000 books. In partnership with Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) Pupil Transportation, a series of five school bus safety workshops were offered in the weeks leading up to the first day of school. This effort made 128 rising Kindergarteners feel better prepared for their first steps into their future education.

Workshops for childcare providers were offered to assist the local early childhood education workforce with developing their skills and in earning free continuing education credit. Ninety-four people attended. In support of advocacy for youth, HCPL partnered with Henrico CASA's (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children) "Home for Good" project with the Advanced Career Education Center (ACE) at HCPS, by displaying a special book-themed "Magic Treehouse" playhouse this year at Libbie Mill.

To keep reading momentum strong, teens are encouraged to read books through the *100 Books Before Graduation* program. Since this initiative launched in late 2022, a total of 1,440 teens have participated and 61 have reached the goal.

### **Summer Reading Success and Growth**

The 2024 Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) ran from June 1 to August 1 and engaged over 6,616 patrons, along with a total attendance of 28,422 at library programs. The Summer Reading theme was *Adventure Begins at Your Library* which was used to boost meaningful engagement through interactive displays and activities. One feature of the

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Summer Program this year was a “Where’s Scooter the Sloth?” photo guessing contest, which additionally helped promote Henrico Recreation and Parks sites and other County destinations.

The SRC Committee reenergized the Challenge this year with a simplified process allowing participants to earn points for reading and attending library programs. It also incorporated branch-specific kick-off and finale parties and more appealing prizes generously provided by the Friends of HCPL. The efforts were successful as the SRC program sign-ups increased by 160% and finishers rose by 182% this year.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

HCPL continues to prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, understanding that being an inclusive and accessible resource is fundamental to the success of library service. Staff have held enriching programs and created displays celebrating diverse identities during commemorative months. Traditions of India, a day-long event in May at Twin Hickory, offered multigenerational programming based on sights and sounds of India through games, activities, and art such as Rangoli and Henna, a sitar lecture-demonstration, and drumming from award-winning recording artist, Dr. Suman Sharma. Similarly, Familia Fiesta, a day-long event, took place at Tuckahoe in September which featured multigenerational programming including a performance, lecture, musical demonstration on the Puerto Rican music traditions of Bomba, Plena, and Salsa by the group BioRitmo/Miramar, and crafts and games inspired by Central and South American folk arts and traditions.

The Library’s Equitability Task Force helps make the library more inclusive in its policies and services. In 2024, HCPL participated in Henrico Day at Virginia Union University and Virginia State University, sharing information about HCPL and promoting career opportunities.

The IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) committee is prioritizing accessibility in its work this year, working to enhance the library experience for persons with disabilities. Art for All Abilities, a new series of workshops, is designed for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their caregivers, allowing them to explore art projects in a workshop led by Art on Wheels. HCPL offered 12 sessions from January-June 2024. The Public Relations team is also working to ensure that HCPL’s website is accessible to everyone. They are actively enhancing the site’s design and functionality to provide an inclusive experience for all users, including those using screen readers and other assistive technologies. HCPL engaged Hermitage Enterprises staff to assist with trash pick-up at Fairfield Area Library. Library Headquarters staff worked with Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS), Hermitage Enterprises, and County HR to create a new hourly position “Admin Service Worker” which employs an intellectually or developmentally challenged employee in administrative work in support of the library.

### **Adult Programming**

Adult events and classes covered a wide range of topics, including several successful series. The Bob Singer Senior Series focused on keeping seniors healthy and active. Sponsored by Friends of Henrico County Public Library, this series included a partnership with Senior Connections with programs offering tips on heart health, home safety, and fall prevention. The *Something to Talk About* series held monthly at the Varina Area Library featured senior-focused programs on topics such as financial literacy and safety and wellness.

HCPL continued to work with Henrico County Recreation and Parks, including the History Division. For the program *Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative*, a representative from the Library of Virginia led a transcription

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workshop during which participants transcribed handwritten documents related to the lives of enslaved and free Black people in pre-1865 Henrico County.

Adult programming supported local writers with author presentations and book signings. An example is Rachel Beanland's talk about her book *The House is on Fire*, which saw a strong attendance of 76 participants at Tuckahoe Library.

## All Henrico Reads

Nearly 2,000 guests – an all-time high – attended All Henrico Reads on March 28, 2024, as bestselling and award-winning author Cheryl Strayed discussed her memoir *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*. The event was held for the first time in the new, spacious Henrico Sports & Events Center. All Henrico Reads, the county's popular, long-running literary event, continues through sponsorship of the Friends of Henrico County Public Library and in partnership with HCPS. In 2025, the event featured bestselling author Ruth Reichl and her work *The Paris Novel* in March.

## Awards

HCPL received a "Virginia Public Library Gold Standards of Excellence" Award from the Virginia Public Library Directors Association at the Virginia Library Association Conference in October. This new award looks at metrics of library service across the State. To achieve the "Gold" standard in the first year is a testament to the valuable role the library plays in helping people and in building community.

HCPL received three NACo (National Association of Counties) awards in the past year. They included a partnership with artist Hamilton Glass which resulted in murals at three libraries: Libbie Mill, Tuckahoe, and Varina. Each mural measures 4 by 12 feet, includes three wood panels, and highlights an aspect of HCPL's mission statement: to "promote reading and lifelong learning, connect people with the information they need, and enrich community life." Glass led workshops where participants curated and painted the murals. The initiative reflects HCPL's focus on intergenerational programming and was a collaboration with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. This project was supported by the Paul Mellon Endowment and the Jean Stafford Camp Memorial Fund, with additional sponsorship provided by the Friends of HCPL. HCPL also received a NACo award for Cook & Book, a popular program at Varina Area Library that celebrates the joys of cuisine and reading and connects residents, local chefs, and restaurateurs to share recipes and kitchen techniques. The third award was Celebrating the Traditions of Quilting, a community art program exploring the cultural traditions of quilting. Connecting Communities with Quilts encouraged participants to create paper quilt blocks, which were assembled and displayed at six library locations. The project included a workshop by Kuumba Afrikan American Quilting Guild, a lecture by Denise Lowe Walters of the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, a screening of the "Craft in America: Quilts" documentary, and tips on visiting barn quilt trails across rural Virginia.

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## LIBRARY OUTREACH AND COUNTY COLLABORATION

### Library Outdoor and Community Events

The library's Outreach Division continues to expand participation in County events and to connect with the community beyond library buildings. These activities also support Henrico County initiatives and amplify County messaging.

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In FY24, the Outreach Division represented HCPL at 94 community events, interacting with more than 12,500 people. The Division also provided 135 programs. These included 96 for youth with 1,634 in attendance, and 38 for adults, with 273 in attendance. More than 15,500 items were circulated through the Outreach Division. The Division developed new partnerships with ReEstablish Richmond, Henrico Health/VDH [Women, Infants & Children \(WIC\)](#) East, and did extensive work as a continuation of the Henrico United collaboration which started in FY23, serving communities including St. Luke's Apartments, Nottingham Green, and Woodman West. HCPL Outreach was present at Dorey Park Farmer's Market, Juneteenth, PrideFest, Autism Society of Central Virginia Family Fun Day, a Richmond Health Fair serving the Ismaili Community, and the Sickle Cell 5K. At these events and more, the library was able to connect with and encourage families and the public to enjoy and use the library's many services.

Library Outreach strongly supports Henrico County Public Schools. Over the past year, this included working with the Oak Center Complex of HCPS, Family and Community Engagement (FACE), McKinney-Vento initiatives, and a renewed partnership with the HCPS Welcome Center at Tucker High School. The Division also participated in Kindergarten readiness, college and career nights, and activities with Henrico Adult Education at the Regency campus.

## **Voting**

Six of HCPL's nine physical locations support voting in the County. Fairfield, Gayton, North Park, and Libbie Mill Libraries serve as voting precincts. Tuckahoe and Varina both had drop-off ballot boxes available to the public. Varina Library served as an early voting office site, one of three in the county.

## **Community Wellness**

HCPL continued to support the County's important efforts through the Empower Henrico Task Force. Staff served on committees, including the NARCAN and Aging Actively sub-committees. Library representatives participated in the Recovery Day Event and supported Moms in Recovery efforts.

Watch Out Ahead Henrico (WOAH!) reflective vests are available at all libraries. This public-awareness campaign is an important effort to keep streets safer for everyone and libraries distributed more than 5,000 high visibility reflective vests.

## **Sustainability**

HCPL helped, with other County agencies, to pursue a federal grant which resulted in 1.4 million dollars being given to the County for the development and infrastructure for EV charging stations. The Fairfield Area and Tuckahoe Area Libraries will have charging stations in the future as part of the grant. The project underscores HCPL's commitment to support sustainability and the environment—one of its priority values.

The popular Land Lovers Series presented topics including: encouraging pollinators, incorporating native plantings, and supporting wildlife, including black bears. These programs are designed to provide education and support for locally sustainable actions for the Land Lover and Clean Business Awards. Partners with the series included Henrico Cooperative Extension, Henrico Master Gardeners, Keep Henrico Beautiful, Capital Trees, the Riverine Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists, and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

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Three HCPL staff were active in leadership roles and on committees as part of H.E.A.R.T. (Henrico's Environmental Action Resource Team). As part of H.E.A.R.T.'s Earth Day-related activities, trees were given away at Libbie Mill Library. H.E.A.R.T. joined forces with the James River Association to "Paint Out Pollution" by painting colorful scenes featuring native wildlife at a storm drain at Tuckahoe Library. HCPL partnered with Keep Henrico Beautiful and H.E.A.R.T. to add native plants to the courtyard at Glen Allen Library. The goal is for everyone to enjoy watching the native plants grow and to be inspired to use native plants in their own landscape.