MENDOCINO COUNTY Library

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

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Previous page: The view in Point Arena.

LIBRARY LOCATIONS

BOOKMOBILE
105 N. MAIN ST.
UKIAH
(707) 234-2874

COAST COMMUNITY
BRANCH
225 MAIN ST.
POINT ARENA
(707) 882-3114

FORT BRAGG BRANCH
499 E. LAUREL ST.
FORT BRAGG
(707) 964-2020

LAYTONVILLE BRANCH
44960 N. HWY 101 SUITE D
LAYTONVILLE
(707) 234-6390

ROUND VALLEY BRANCH
23925 HOWARD ST
COVELO
(707) 983-6736

UKIAH MAIN BRANCH
105 N. MAIN ST.
UKIAH
(707) 463-4490

WILLITS BRANCH
390 E. COMMERCIAL ST.
WILLITS
(707) 459-5908

ADMINISTRATION &
OPERATIONAL SERVICES
105 N. MAIN ST.
UKIAH
(707) 234-2872
(707) 234-2861

Flowers in bloom at the Fort Bragg Branch.

COUNTY LIBRARIAN'S MESSAGE

The 2024/25 fiscal year was quite busy in the Mendocino County Library system. Many multi-year projects were completed, though a few more are ongoing. The project that had the most impact on staff was the completion of a Classification Study for everyone who works for the Library. While management finished its section at the end of 2024, the bulk of the positions were finished in 2025. All staff members described their responsibilities, and with a great deal of help from Human Resources, those descriptions were compiled and interpreted so that employees were placed in the classification that best reflected their day-to-day responsibilities. Once the study was completed, new positions were presented to the Civil Service Commission for approval. From there, it went before the County Board of Supervisors. This lengthy process was well worth it, as staff classifications better reflect their work, which should also contribute to more efficiency in the years to come.

Another project that took many years to complete, but I am ecstatic to say is finally done, is the new roof of the Willits Branch Library. After a few false starts, a construction crew was chosen, and a new metal roof was installed. Now the branch is leak-free, crowned with an off-white metal that not only coordinates with the other roofs in the neighborhood but also matches the mortar of the brick building beautifully. If you haven't visited the Willits Library recently, make sure to stop by and admire it. A big thank you goes out to the Facilities team for helping us get to the finish line.

The Library's Collection Development ad hoc committee began working on a new policy right before the state passed AB-1825, the California Freedom to Read Act. The timing couldn't

County Librarian Mellisa Hannum at the Coast Community Branch.

COUNTY LIBRARIAN'S MESSAGE CONT.

have been better for a revamp of Mendocino County Library's Collection Development Policy. A few areas of the Library that had been neglected in the previous version were added, with the ad hoc committee discussing the best ways to represent the Library's culture and the communities it serves. Once those sections had been addressed, I worked with the State Library to make sure the policy incorporated the language required by the California Freedom to Read Act. Earlier this year, it was finalized and approved by both the State Library and the County Board of Supervisors. If you're interested in reading it, the new policy is available on the Library's website.

Now that I've covered a few of our accomplishments, I'll focus on some of the projects that are ongoing. The Library is right in the thick of the work required for getting a new Bookmobile. The old one is at the end of its life, and if you depend on the Bookmobile for Library access, you already know that it is regularly in the shop. After working with Dave and Norm, their Branch Manager, and conducting two community outreach workshops, options and layouts were chosen. Next steps include the building process – which may take a year or two – and choosing the best place to park and plug in the new hybrid truck.

Another in-process job is a state mandate, SB 1329, that makes it easier to give students access to a public library card. Mendocino County Library needs to be completed with this mandate by January 1, 2029. With 12 school districts within the county, this can be quite a challenge, but we started early and already have memorandums of understanding with almost half of the districts. Research indicates that by the third grade, children who have a public library card show higher literacy rates. Those who don't have access may struggle to keep up with their peers. I am passionate about children's literacy, and I feel lucky to have the state's support in helping to ensure Mendocino County's children and teens excel.

2025/26 will have its own set of challenges and projects, and I am honored to be the one who gets to play such a direct role in helping the Library to succeed.

- Mellisa Hannum, County Librarian

Library staff at All Staff Day at the Coast Community Library.

ALL STAFF DAY

While last year's All Staff meeting focused on supporting the mental and emotional health of our employees, this year's focused on safety and the First Amendment. While those things might not seem similar, they are two challenges regularly faced by library workers.

Our dedicated patrons are probably aware of Banned Books Week, the seven days in the fall when libraries across the country focus on informing the public about challenges to materials, displays, and access to information. In 2024, 2,452 unique titles were challenged in the United States, the third-highest number ever documented by the American Library Association (ALA) and significantly exceeding the annual average of 273 unique titles over the period from 2001–2020.

Justin Wasterlain is an ALA "Law for Librarians" trainer in California, and he generously donated his time to offer Mendocino County Library staff a workshop on the First Amendment during All Staff Day. The focus was on intellectual freedom, censorship, current challenges, laws that impact intellectual freedom, and what actions library workers can take to protect information without restriction. The presentation was informative and interesting, touching upon Supreme Court decisions and current trends. It was an empowering 90 minutes, and Justin was open to answering any questions people had. It felt like everyone left the program with more tools and understanding to help them address conversations about books or censorship that might come up in the future.

Over a tasty lunch, thanks to Point Arena's Franny's Cup and Saucer and Fort Bragg's Harvest Market, folks got to hang out, connect, and offer each other tips on successful programming and events. I really value our working lunches during All Staff Day, as they give people a chance to relax, sit down, and engage with their peers from other branches. Our communities may be spread far apart from each other, but we have a lot more in common than we sometimes think.

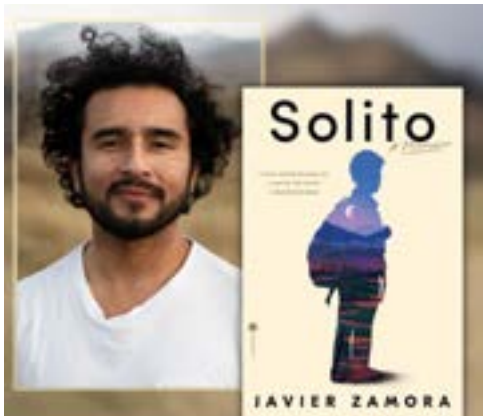
After discussing policy changes and updates to how things run behind the scenes, the afternoon offered a couple of options – a self-defense workshop with Eddy Black, or, for those uncomfortable with the physicality, a crafting activity led by Amie McGee. Those who chose crafts had a fun time bonding and left with some ingenious creations. Those who chose the self-defense class learned the best techniques to stay safe or to escape from a bad situation, all with Eddy's gentle guidance.

As always, I hope that our annual All Staff Day gave my team a chance to connect, learn, and leave with tools to aid them in their everyday work in the Library. I feel lucky to have such a talented, dedicated group of employees who love their libraries and their communities.

Mellisa Hannum, County Librarian

Top: Staff listen to a presentation about censorship in libraries.

VIRTUAL AUTHOR TALKS



TOTAL PROGRAMS
37

TOTAL VIEWS OF PROGRAMS
6,282

Mendocino County Library is pleased to continue participation in the Library Speakers Consortium cooperative to present virtual author talks each month featuring bestselling, award-winning, and highly acclaimed authors from around the world. The featured writers and thought leaders cover a wide range of fiction and nonfiction genres. The free, virtual series takes place two to three times a month and includes the opportunity to ask questions to the author. The virtual recordings are available online and can also be viewed on demand. A complete list of events is available on our Library Speakers Consortium website.

LIBRARY OUTREACH

The 2024-25 season has been full of vital programming and the continued expansion of our community partnerships for Library Outreach. Our mission to provide equitable access to library resources has continued to strengthen staff commitment in serving diverse community needs and fostering lifelong learning.

Our outreach efforts extend across the county, driven by our commitment to connecting with local agencies, service organizations, schools, towns, and Tribes. This year, we expanded our Senior Tech Help events to cover both Willits at the Willits Senior Center and Fort Bragg at the Redwood Coast Seniors building. The expansion of this program significantly increases our efforts to extend onsite digital technical assistance designed explicitly for seniors. Through these sessions, we have been able to support older adults in navigating digital technologies, thereby enhancing their ability to access information and stay connected in an increasingly digital world.

This summer, Outreach had the privilege of partnering again with our library branches for the highly successful Lunch at the Library (LATL) program which provides lunches and programming at individual branches or at community meal sites. Local school districts, independent agencies, and the U.S.D.A. provided the nutritional component of the program by supplying lunches for children 0-18. Library branches and Outreach, with grant funding from the California State Library, provided programming such as arts and crafts, music and movement, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) activities, storytimes, access to the Summer Reading Program, and books for home libraries. This collaboration supported our community's growth in health, wellness, literacy, and social-emotional learning, helping to build a strong foundation for success in school and beyond. This year our Lunch at the Library programming continued to grow as we expanded our in-branch lunch program to the Willits Library. Over the summer, LATL saw both a significant increase in community participation and the number of lunches served

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Top: Movies at the Pool in Ukiah. Bottom: Outreach at the Redwood Valley Rancheria Spirit Run.

LIBRARY OUTREACH CONT.

at both our libraries and community meal sites.

Outreach continued a strong partnership with the City of Ukiah for summer activities. We provided Library programming at local community events such as Touch-A-Truck, Movies at the Pool, Pumpkinfest, and Bounce to the Stars, which serve as opportunities to engage with residents and promote library services in a fun, informal setting. Around the county we attended the Anderson Valley Health Center Harvest Festival, Redwood Valley Rancheria Spirit Run, Round Valley Youth Activity Day, Potter Valley Plant Fair Pomolita, Native Families Night, Laytonville Community Fair, and the Instilling Goodness Book Fair, to name a few.

2024-25 was a year of meaningful growth, innovation, and deeper community engagement for MCL Outreach. Through the launch of new services, the development of strategic partnerships, and active involvement in local events, we have significantly expanded our reach and strengthened our impact across Mendocino County. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to making library resources more accessible and inclusive for all residents. Looking ahead, we are focused on building upon this momentum, broadening our services, exploring new opportunities for collaboration, and continuing to foster lifelong learning and strong community connections through dynamic library programming.

Nayo Sicard, Bookmobile Branch Manager & Outreach Services

Top: Senior Tech Help event at the Ukiah Sun House Senior Apartments.
Bottom: Songwriting at the Huckleberry Jam Festival.

SEED LIBRARY

The County Seed Librarians had a strong presence at this year's Seed and Scion Exchange/Winter Abundance Gathering in Philo. Our table was busy all day long, reflecting the excitement and enthusiasm of being part of this long-standing community event.

At the Coast Community Branch Library, seed requests surged this year, driven largely by concerns over food insecurity and rising produce costs. The seed library was integrated into the Farm to Table program and Lunch at the Library events, introducing many adults and children to gardening. Behind the library, three planters now grow mountain spinach, chard, rosemary, and thyme—planted by local students. The seed library played a central role in educating and supporting families interested in growing their own food.

The Fort Bragg Branch also experienced significant growth, distributing thousands of seed packets and receiving generous donations of locally grown seeds. Collaborations included events with the Fort Bragg Garden Club and Field of Dreams, seed-saving workshops, and participation in the school health fair. Educational classes led by Sakina Bush were well attended, and hundreds of seed kits were prepped for students during Lunch at the Library. The branch's strong partnerships and community support made for a highly successful year.

The Round Valley Branch thrived with January "Work Parties," where volunteers packaged seed, and monthly "Planting Parties" at the local farmers market, offering seeds and supplies for patrons to grow their own plants. They hosted a seed giveaway at the Round Valley Earth Day Celebration and partnered with the local food bank to distribute seeds at food pantry events. The branch is also preparing for its third annual Gathering of Seed Savers this November, which attracts participants from across the region.

Top: Seed Library booth at the Philo Seed and Scion Exchange. Bottom: Master Gardener Sakina Bush presents at the Fort Bragg Branch.

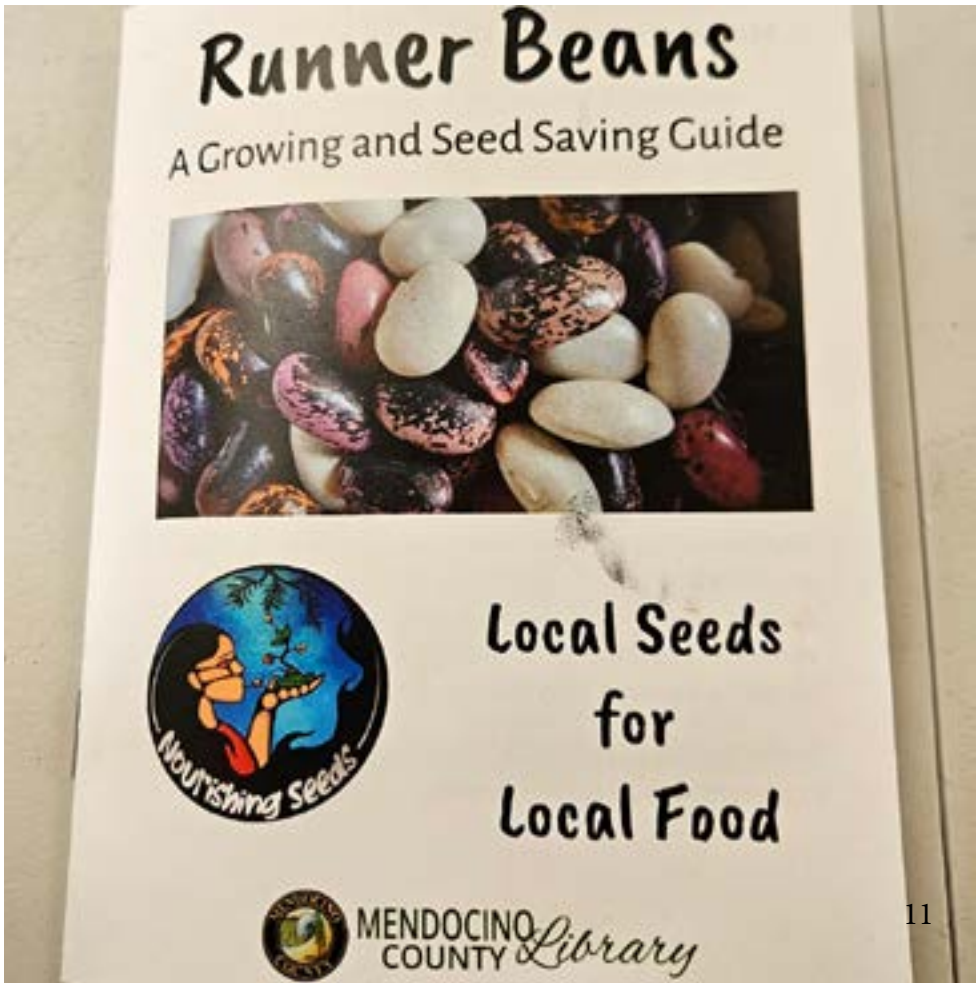
SEED LIBRARY CONT.

The Ukiah Branch hosted its second successful succulent and plant swap, with all plants finding new homes. The Pod Squad, a dedicated group of seed volunteers, played a key role in managing the Yokayo Seed Project and will host a tomato tasting event this fall. Ukiah also launched a Produce and Pantry Share on the last Saturday in August, September, and October to encourage sharing of excess garden harvests and pantry goods. The popular Urban Homesteading 101 series will return this fall and winter with workshops on herbal teas, sourdough bread, mushroom growing, and beekeeping.

The Willits Branch continued to serve as a vital community resource, distributing over 2,800 seed packets this year. Community members also donated seeds, enhancing the diversity of the collection. The branch participated in three regional exchanges, helping to strengthen connections with other seed savers. A seed-packing party and children's sunflower planting program were highlights of the year. Willits also launched a Seed Library newsletter, offering seasonal tips and event updates to keep patrons engaged.

Together, the seed libraries across the county have empowered residents to grow their own food, learn new skills, and build resilience through shared resources and information. In all, 12,670 seed packets were distributed last year. Our seed libraries not only promote sustainable gardening but also foster stronger, healthier communities. The seed library program continues to grow in reach and impact, making it a valuable asset for our county library system.

Pat Sobrero, Sr. Library Technician



Top: Seed packets at the Fort Bragg Library. Bottom: A Growing and Seed Saving Guide offered at the Fort Bragg Library.

SUMMER READING

With the theme "Level Up at Your Library!" Mendocino County Library "leveled up" our 2025 Summer Reading Program (SRP). We hosted one of our busiest summers to date, including over 350 events and 14,324 participants over the course of the season. Whether community members were looking for games, performances, scavenger hunts, craft events, books for a home library, free meals, or even just a safe, free space to beat the heat, it was a summer with something for everyone.

On the coast, programs offered by the Fort Bragg and Coast Community library branches included, but were not limited to, an end-of-season art show for children, Teen Lock-Ins, Crafternoons, and even fabulous Dungeons & Dragons campaigns for teens. Moving inland, the Ukiah, Round Valley, and Willits branches put together events including the wildly popular Kids Farmers Market, Kids Reading Club, a jungle animal scavenger hunt, Farmers Market Storytime, and of course, Storytime at the Park, among many others.

All branches made a concerted effort to connect with the community by participating in or hosting outreach events over the summer, whether through Lunch at the Library pop-up events (Fort Bragg, Round Valley, and Ukiah), tabling and Pride events (Coast Community and Ukiah), joining existing school events like the Elk/Greenwood SRP (Bookmobile), or walking in the Independence Day and Hometown Celebration parades (Coast Community and Willits).

In an effort to cut back on plastic waste and refocus on literacy and school readiness, most library branches chose to simplify prizes for SRP participants this year and awarded items such as books, comics, school supplies, and Cowlick's Ice Cream gift cards.

Sam White, Ukiah Children's Librarian

Top: The Conservation Ambassadors Wild Things show at the Coast Community Branch. Bottom: Bri Crabtree's Silly Circus at the Willits Branch.

LUNCH AT THE LIBRARY

In addition to our Summer Reading Program, Mendocino County Library ran a robust Lunch at the Library through a grant from the California State Library at five library branches.

The Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Round Valley branches provided library services for youth aged 0-18 using grant funds at existing USDA summer lunch locations in their communities. Local school districts, individual schools, and tribal and community partners hosted the USDA summer lunch sites with the library providing pop-up programming. Activities included Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), crafts, music and movement-based activities, nutrition education, gardening, and provided youth with new books for students' home libraries.

The Coast and Willits branches provided youth activities in their library meeting rooms partnering with local school districts which provided USDA lunches four days per week over an eight-week period.

In total, the Mendocino County Library and partners were able to provide Summer Lunch at the Library services to thousands of youths (and caregivers) in various communities around Mendocino County, including a total of 2,010 lunches served and 1201 books for home libraries!

Lunch at the Library is a project of the California State Library, supported with funds from the State of California.

Children's Librarian Sam White at Lunch at the Library pop-up event in Ukiah.

Clockwise from left: Branch Manager Josh Bennett helping patrons with the smoothie bike at the Round Valley Branch; girl planting seeds at the Coast Community Branch; Children's Librarian Kim Doyle at the Lunch at the Library event in Fort Bragg.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

This year, the Library advanced its commitment to upgrading technology and expanding digital services. In collaboration with the County IT Department, all branch computers were successfully transitioned to the Windows 11 operating system. We also launched mobile printing across every branch, giving patrons the ability to print wirelessly from their own devices using Princh MobilePrint. In addition, we upgraded our Horizon library software to the latest version, which improved stability, resolved bugs, and ensured smoother daily service for patrons.

Our digital collections also grew. We continued our subscription to Brainfuse HelpNow, which provides free online tutoring and homework support for K–12 students and adult learners, and added CollegeNow, a new Brainfuse resource offering expert guidance on college admissions. The Library's Alexander Street collection, provided through the California State Library, expanded as well, now offering drama texts in addition to its wide range of performing arts audio and video.

Technology-focused programming was a highlight this year. Coding events for kids were held at branches in Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Coast Community, Round Valley, and Willits. The Build-a-Robot series wrapped up at the Laytonville Book Room, where kids created their own art "doodle robots."

To further enhance library services, staff participated in professional development workshops on LibraryAware and Canva, learning new skills in graphic design and marketing to better promote programs and resources.

Lily Rojo, Department Application Specialist

Top: Build-a-Robot event at the Laytonville Book Room. Bottom: Dept. App. Specialist Lily Rojo at a Kids Coding event at the Fort Bragg Branch.

BOOKMOBILE

Greetings Mendocino County residents.

The Mendocino County Bookmobile is a mobile library service designed to bring Library access to communities across Mendocino County that may not be served by a fixed branch. The Bookmobile carries over 4,000 items, including fiction, nonfiction, mysteries, science fiction/fantasy, children's and young adult materials, large-type books, audiobooks, and an extensive DVD collection. Residents with library cards have access to California State Park Passes, Wi-Fi hot spots, solar charging stations, DIY kits, and the recently added Radon Gas Detectors. Patrons can check out, renew, or request materials from any public library in Mendocino, Lake, or Sonoma counties for delivery to your scheduled stop.

The Bookmobile also collaborates with a variety of community partners, such as schools, senior centers, after-school programs, and other community organizations for joint stops and events.

This past year, the Bookmobile participated in some especially memorable events, including the Touch-a-Truck family program at The Pear Tree Center, a growing Storytime at our Anderson Valley/Boonville stop, plus we had the pleasure of providing temporary access to Library services at Anderson Valley Junior-Senior High School during the recent renovation of its school library. The Bookmobile also partners with our local Native American tribes, the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians and the Pinoleville Pomo Nation, to provide Library access to the schools and all tribal members.

The Bookmobile staff welcomes all county residents to visit us at one of our many stops. The list of locations can be found on the library website at mendolibrary.org/visit/bookmobile. We are ready, willing, and able to assist you with all your Library needs.

Norm Longoria, Bookmobile Driver II

Top: Sr. Library Technician Dave Frick assists patrons at the Boonville stop. Bottom: Bookmobile Driver Norm Longoria at the Touch-a-Truck event in Ukiah.

LAYTONVILLE BRANCH

The Laytonville branch continues to be an asset to the community of Laytonville. This year, over 1,500 more people came to the branch than the previous year. We offer two programs monthly, Storytime and Tech help. The children have been enjoying scavenger hunts, and a children's Creation Station. We also give out take-n-make craft kits.

Denise Jessie, Laytonville & Willits Branch Manager

Top left: Board game collection at Laytonville Branch. Bottom left: Stained glass book worm open sign. Bottom right: Chalkboard sign with open hours.

COAST COMMUNITY BRANCH

Coast Community Library serves the southern Mendocino and northern Sonoma coast from Elk to Sea Ranch and everything in between, with regular outreach to Anderson Valley. While the community that we serve may be modest in size, we strive to connect with as many people as possible through a wide range of activities.

Point Arena Fire Safe meets at the library on the first Wednesday of each month. We offer drop-in tech help every Tuesday. People learn about the traditions and foods of the Lunar New Year, and Lunch at the Library feeds kids and teens when school is out for the summer. Coast also participates in our local gatherings including the Almost Fringe Festival, Hometown Holidays, and the Independence Parade. Of course, the library offers traditional programming as well, including Summer Reading, teen-run activities, author talks, book clubs, and Storytime. There are programs for all ages, and on some days, as many as seven programs will occur over the course of the branch's open hours!

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Coast Community Branch staff and volunteers at the Point Arena Independence Day Parade.

COAST COMMUNITY CONT.

We recognize that our community expands far beyond the brick-and-mortar branch building, so staff also focus on outreach to connect with the public where they are. We regularly attend occasions like the School Health Fair, events at the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians' reservation, visiting Coastal Seniors, and even taking the librarians to Boonville.

Coast Community Library may be small, but it is mighty. Check out some of the branch's statistics from the past year:

- 770 programs offered with 10,440 patrons in attendance
- Held 24 outreach events with a total of 3,315 attendees
- 6,755 children & teens participated in programs
- 3,690 adults attended library events
- 205 children and teens were fed during Lunch at the Library

Mellisa Hannum, County Librarian & Coast Branch Manager

Top: Sr. Library Technician Terra Black and volunteer at the Native American Pomo Outreach Emergency Preparedness event in Manchester.
Bottom: Local author book talk event.

FORT BRAGG BRANCH

The 2025 library week theme was "Drawn to the Library." Over the year, Fort Bragg Branch drew program attendance 3,941 and outreach attendance 6,937 combined for a programming total of 10,878 and 120,000 checkouts from our collections. Each visit was free! Each visit gave the guest something to ponder and learn, introduced a new topic or resource, and strengthened their connections to neighbors or people around the world. In a time of walls and warfare, the importance of open doors and shared concerns is even more important than during times of tranquility.

Self-empowerment is the goal of public libraries—offering pathways for life-long learning. Personal growth comes through storytimes, library crafts, weekly LEGO®, Sinister Science programs for kids, seed library workshops, teen D&D, Poetry open mic, or Adult Book Club. These are the types of programs that draw people of all ages to our branch each month. Regular programs build good followings. Teen D&D has 8 steady players, and Book Club has 30 avid readers. The regular children's programs have between 15 and 30 participants.

The numbers grow when we have special guest performers. Animals fill the room with over 200 guests. Puppet Shows and Circus events draw 50 to 80.

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Top: Music event. Bottom: Poetry event.

FORT BRAGG CONT.

Families love to see performers from other regions of California. The Friends of Fort Bragg Library supports the monthly and special programs with systemwide funding for select programs. Free programs make it easy for families on tight budgets to attend. We host the Paul Bunyan Days Kiddie Parade each September and award prizes and treats for everyone at the finish line. Each year, the Fort Bragg Police provide free bicycles for the best costumes!

Library staff members take our show on the road with many outreach activities. During the school year, staff read stories at Head Start and Children's Garden Preschool. Twice a month, we offer home library building books at the Farmers Market. Special events include the city's Trunk or Treat, where Waldo and Oddlaw hand out candy to 2,500 people. We offer books for home libraries at summer camps, Read with a Ranger at California State Parks, share art projects and books at Noyo Food Garden on Earth Day, discuss librarianship at Fort Bragg High School career days, and promote the library with speaking engagements at Rotary and City Council. Each year, we receive the Mayor's Proclamation of Banned Books Week. In 2025, we partnered with local businesses to host StoryWalk® panels, rewarding walkers with a cookie at Mendocino Cookie Company, compliments of the Friends of the Library. We are seen and heard outside our walls, increasing the "draw" of our library.

Please drop by our branch when you're in Fort Bragg. There's sure to be something exciting!

Dan Hess, Fort Bragg Branch Manager

Top: Nature Joe animal presentation. Bottom: Book display.

ROUND VALLEY BRANCH

The Round Valley Branch had over 24,000 visits last year and we made 147 new library cards. 1,927 folks attended one or more of our over 100 programs. Our branch added 1,427 new items to our collection, and we circulated 17,572 items, many of these Library materials were sent to patrons at other branches.

The Round Valley Branch was awarded the prestigious Eisner Innovation Grant for Libraries, which supports the creative use of graphic novels and comics in library programming. Senior Library Technician Pat Sobrero travelled to Philadelphia attend the American Library Association annual conference to accept the award. The grant pays for graphic novels for children and teens and a community "open house" to celebrate the graphic novel format and explore how comics can enrich learning and build community.

This year, two Library programs focused on Spanish speaking patrons in Round Valley. The Library's Save the Children grant provided books in Spanish and English to classrooms at Round Valley Elementary and Middle School as part of the school's Dia De Los Niños event where Library staff also organized a bilingual StoryWalk®. In April, the Library hosted the organization Nuestra Alianza de Willits for a You're your Rights presentation in Spanish for immigrant families of any status who are concerned about ICE raids and deportation.

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The community gathered at the Round Valley Branch.

ROUND VALLEY CONT.

The Round Valley Branch's Seed Library had a great year with its January volunteer work parties and monthly planting parties held at the local farmers market. Our Seed Library had a table at the Round Valley Earth Day Celebration and partnered with the local food bank to distribute seeds during pantry events. In September, the branch partnering with Folk Life Farms hosted the workshop The Joy of Fermentation. Additionally, the Seed Library held a successful Gathering of Seed Savers/Seed Returns Celebration in November which drew participants from across the region. Over the course of the year, the Seed Library distributed over 3,000 packets of seeds.

The branch's Documentary Film Series explored themes such as sustainability, social justice, and current affairs. This year's selections included Sugarcane, shown in partnership with the Round Valley Indian Tribes' Missing and Murdered Indigenous People program, and Join or Die, a film exploring the importance of civic engagement for community and individual wellbeing. This year moviegoers were treated to an upgraded projector and screen, thanks to the Friends of the Round Valley Public Library and the Community Foundation of Mendocino County.

Storytime covered a lot of ground for ages 0 – 7. Read-a-loud themes included bicycles, food, shapes, firefighters, back-to-school, five senses, water safety, and "in between storytime" which included books about immigrants and refugees. Programs for older kids included a STEM "Build-a-robot" activity, coding class on Scratch, Summer Reading Club for Kids, Lunch at the Library partnership with the Tis Bil (Eagle) Education Summer Program, Wild Things animal show, and a hilarious Silly Circus Show by Bri Crabtree.

Josh Bennett, Round Valley Branch Manager and Pat Sobrero, Sr. Library Technician

Top: Sr. Library Technician Pat Sobrero at the Joy of Fermentation workshop.
Bottom: The community gathers for the Best Small Library in America event.

UKIAH MAIN BRANCH

The Ukiah Branch has been bustling, averaging 524 visitors per day. We were thrilled to unveil our beautiful new mural by local artist Dell Linney. Thanks to our Ukiah Valley Friends of the Library for their grant-writing, committee work, and dedication to supporting the mural's creation. We had a small ceremony and celebration in December, which also featured live music, cake from Schats, and commemorative bags that featured the mural design.

Children's Librarian Sam partnered with various local schools and organizations, including the Ukiah Natural Foods Co-op, River Oak Charter School, and the City of Ukiah Parks and Recreation to host the Kids Winter Fair, Winter Walk in the Woods, and the Kids Farmer's Market, respectively. Local businesses such as Mendocino Book Company and The Nook participated in the Downtown StoryWalk® program to read the English/Spanish bilingual picture book, Diminuta by Silvina Rocha. Family Fort Night was a cozy after-hours event for families to build forts, paint rocks, and enjoy each other's company.

Teen Librarian Katherine offered a Halloween Teen Lock-In that featured escape room fun, t-shirt decorating, and pizza. This one currently holds the record for most Lock-In attendees with 30 teens! Katherine also offered a First Time Voter Education workshop for new voters in October, a Teen Virtual Reality Day in November, Internet Safety and Cyber Security for Teens in February, and OMG I Need a Job in April.

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Top: The new mural at the front of the Ukiah Branch. Bottom: Patrons learn Chinese Brush Painting from local artist William Shi.

UKIAH CONT.

September saw the reprisal of the in-person Wines and Spines Book Club, which went on hiatus in 2020. Each month, 10-20 participants gather to discuss books such as Wandering Stars by Tommy Orange and Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan. Lines and Spines Book Club also met on Zoom, while Amble and Ramble offered a drop-in book club for adults to walk and talk about any books of their choosing.

Over the winter, we collected and distributed 670 cold-weather clothing items to anyone in need. Lu partnered with Legal Services of Northern California to offer workshops on renters' rights and scam awareness. We learned basic tech skills during Tech Help. Lily and Alex led 3D Printing and Design Workshops to introduce participants to the basics of 3D printing, including an up-close look at our MakerBot Sketch 3D printers.

We celebrated Pride Month with a Queer Joy Crafting Social and a booth at the Pride Outreach event in downtown Ukiah. We also led a series of poetry walks in downtown Ukiah and co-sponsored the 23rd annual Ukiahaiku Festival to celebrate Ukiah's palindrome. LOBA Poetry Series hosted a variety of featured poets including Florencia Milito, Maw Shein Win, MK Chavez, and Lake County Poet Laureate Brenda Yeager. Local author Karen Rifkin gave a presentation about the History of the Palace Hotel in February. Jo-ann Rosen led a new workshop on community resilience based on the practices in her book Unshakeable. Local retired librarian and author Katy Tahja dropped hot history goss in her presentation, "Things You Never Knew about Mendocino County," based on her book of eclectic local history.

Melissa Eleftherion Carr, Ukiah Branch Manager

Top: Kids sell their homegrown goods at the Kids' Farmers Market at Alex Thomas Plaza. Bottom: Tomato Tasting event.

WILLITS BRANCH

The Willits Branch Library continues to grow as a community hub—a welcoming space where people come to read, study, and connect. Groups gather to play board and card games, families visit to read together and choose books, and young people stop by to socialize and use our computers. This year, we added a study pod—a quiet, enclosed space with a desk that can be reserved for up to three hours. Patrons use it to attend Zoom meetings, take online tests, study, or read. We're proud to report that nearly 1,000 more patrons entered our building this year compared to last year.

ADULT EVENTS

Adults participated in a variety of enriching and engaging programs throughout the year.

- Penny University – A casual "coffee klatch" where attendees discuss a wide range of topics.
- Touch of Mendocino – A monthly program featuring local individuals who share their art, hobbies, or personal skills.
- Book Club – Our longstanding Book Club continues to thrive, with some members participating for over 20 years.
- History on the Silver Screen – A program where we screened historical fiction films and discussed their historical accuracy and the director's creative choices.
- Health & Wellness – Programs like Willits Walk & Talk and Senior Dance promoted physical activity and social connection.
- Creative Programs – Craft-based events included Spinning & Knitting, Sit-n-Sew, and a special Saturday Crafts series during July.

SPECIAL EVENTS

We celebrate diversity by recognizing various heritage months throughout the year. The library is decorated to honor each culture, and we display books by and about that culture

Continued on next page.

Top: Ballet Folklorico performs. Bottom: Sr. Library Technician Julie Castillo at the Terrific Temporary Tattoo event.

WILLITS CONT.

- Women's History Month – We hosted a reception for local women entrepreneurs, including business owners and City Council members, who shared their experiences and supported one another.
- Hispanic Heritage Month – Ballet Folklórico de Mendocino College performed traditional dances from regions across Mexico.
- Native American Heritage Month – We held a special Storytime where a Native American reader shared a book about Thanksgiving from an Indigenous perspective. This was followed by a thoughtful discussion about culture and respect.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

We love welcoming children to the library!

- Field Trips & Class Visits – Students visited to explore the library and pick out books.
- Storytimes – We offered a range of story-based programs, including Storytime, Story and Play Time, Stories in the Park, Animal Tales and Crafts, and Stories at the Farmers Market.
- Special Events – Children enjoyed our Stuffy Campout and continue to have fun at Lego Night.

PASSIVE PROGRAMS

This year, we significantly expanded our passive programming—activities that patrons can enjoy anytime during their visit.

- Monthly Scavenger Hunts
- Memory Games and Puzzles
- Card-Making Stations – For Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.
- Coloring Creation Station – A space for kids to explore their creativity.
- Take-and-Make Kits – Families took home seasonal craft kits, including fall leaf creations and a winter mitten sticker craft.

The Willits Branch Library continues to grow not only as a place of learning and literacy, but as a vital center for connection, creativity, and community engagement. Over the past year, we've expanded our programming, increased patron visits, and introduced new resources like our study pod to better serve the diverse needs of our community. We look forward to continuing this important work in the coming year.

Denise Jessie, Willits & Laytonville Branch Manager

Left to right: Branch Manager Denise Jessie with the Willits Biblio Bike; items for sale at the Winter Craft Fair.

PROGRAM STATISTICS

TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS

323,781

NEW CARDHOLDERS

3,778

TOTAL PROGRAMS

2,592

TOTAL PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

59,161

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS & GENERAL AUDIENCE

1,203

ATTENDANCE FOR ADULTS & GENERAL AUDIENCE

31,989

PROGRAMS FOR AGES 0-18

1,389

ATTENDANCE FOR AGES 0-18

27,172

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

Eggs for sale at the Kids' Farmers Market in Ukiah.

MORE STATISTICS

TOTAL CHECKOUTS

691,056

PHYSICAL CHECKOUTS

397,279

DIGITAL CHECKOUTS

293,777

NEW ITEMS ADDED

13,020

SEED PACKETS CHECKED OUT

12,670

LIBRARY WEB VISITS

411,203

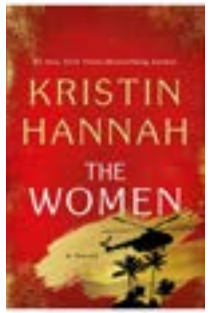
TOTAL ZIP REQUESTS FILLED

422

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

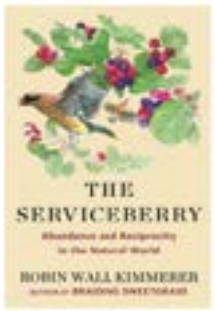
Women's History Month book display at the Willits Branch.

TOP TITLES OF 2025



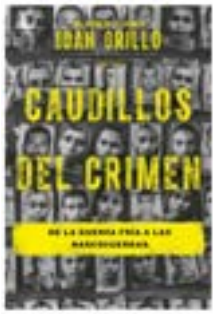
ADULT FICTION
The Women by Kristin Hannah

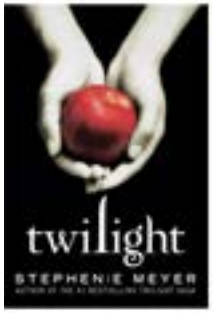
FICCIÓN PARA ADULTOS
El viento conoce mi nombre by Isabel Allende



ADULT NON-FICTION
The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World by Robin Wall Kimmerer

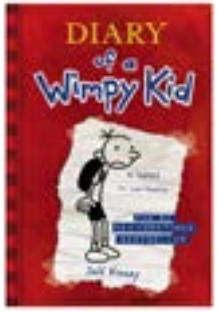
NO FICCIÓN PARA ADULTOS
Caudillos del crimen: de la Guerra Fría a las narcoguerras by Ioan Grillo





YOUNG ADULT FICTION
Twilight by Stephenie Meyer

FICCIÓN PARA ADOLESCENTES
Yo no soy tu perfecta hija mexicana by Erika L. Sánchez



CHILDREN'S FICTION
Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney

FICCIÓN PARA JÓVENES
Diario de Greg: La horrible realidad by Jeff Kinney

OPERATING REVENUE & EXPENSES

REVENUE

57%	SALES & USE TAX
40%	OPERATING TRANSFER IN
1%	INTEREST
2%	OTHER

TOTAL REVENUE
$5,073,169

EXPENSES

64%	EMPLOYEE SALARIES & BENEFITS
11%	A-87 COSTS
6%	PROF & SPEC SVCS-OTHER
2%	UTILITIES
17%	OTHER

TOTAL EXPENSES
$5,194,326

60% of the Measure O sales tax revenue is allocated towards Library operating expenses and came to $2,902,809 in fiscal year 24/25. The Library also received $2,009,647 from property taxes, $45,995 in grant revenue, and $114,718 in other revenue.

Employee salaries and benefits totaled $3,326,284: 64% of total expenses. Another significant expense was the A-87 cost of $587,955, calculated to charge for other county departments' services to the Library. Professional and special services of $309,040 included the regular delivery of books and other materials between the library branches, the security guard for the Ukiah Main branch, Information Technology staff time, and the online catalog and resources shared between Sonoma County Library, Lake County Library, and Mendocino County Library. The book collections, DVDs, CDs, seed libraries, programs for the public, and software for online databases expenses totaled $340,735.

Grant revenue provided by the California State Library paid for staff time and program materials, including the Building Forward (Willits roof), Lunch at the Library, and Zip Books grants. The Library also received a Save the Children grant to provide displays and materials for StoryWalk® programming.

Barb Chapman, Administrative Services Manager

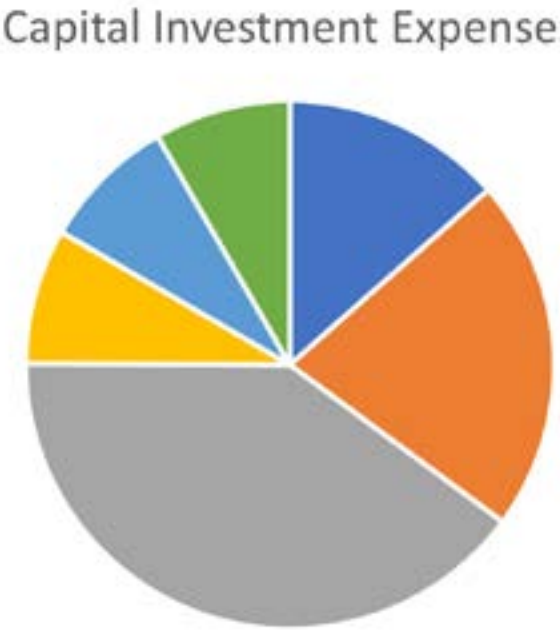
OPERATING EXPENSE ACCOUNTS

REGULAR EMPLOYEES SALARY	$1,988,387
EXTRA HELP	$70,870
OVERTIME REG EMP	$27,289
CO CONTRIBUTION TO RETIREMENT	$574,262
CO CONT TO OASDI	$103,691
CO CONT TO OASDI-MEDIC	$29,137
CO CONT TO RET INCREMEN	$135,471
CO CONT TO EMPLOYEE INS	$367,151
CO CONT WORKERS COMPENS	$30,024
COMMUNICATIONS	$56,171
HOUSEHOLD EXPENSE	$117,483
GENERAL INSURANCE	$51,410
MAINTENANCE-EQUIPMENT	$34,980
MAINTENANCE-STRC IMPR & GRN	$71,877
MEMBERSHIPS	$1,854
OFFICE EXPENSE	$21,600

MEDICAL & DENTAL SVCS	$2,888
EDUCATION & TRAINING	$762
PROF & SPEC SVCS-OTHR	$309,040
PUBL & LEGAL NOTICE	$1,391
A-87 COSTS	$587,955
RNTS & LEASES	$50,040
SOFTWARE-SHORT TERM	$95,396
SOFTWARE-MAINTENANCE	$18,331
INFO TECH EQUIP	$83,249
SPEC DEPT EXP	$227,008
TRAVEL IN COUNTY	$13,384
TRAVEL OUT OF COUNTY	$6,125
UTILITIES	$112,399
EQUIPMENT	$4,700
TOTAL	$5,194,326

CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND

Willits roof construction.



SALES & USE TAX REVENUE
$1,925,166

WILLITS ROOF GRANT REVENUE
$14,886

INTEREST
$53,549

EXPENSES
$74,521

END FY FUND BALANCE
$1,919,080

40%	WILLITS ROOF DESIGN & GRANT WORK
22%	UKIAH ENTRY ARCHITECTURAL SPECIFICATIONS
14%	UKIAH FEASIBILITY SCOPE
8%	ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER FOR ROUND VALLEY
8%	ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER FOR COAST
8%	ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER FOR WILLITS

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS - LIBRARY

The Library's dedicated capital investment fund is made up of 40% of Measure O sales tax revenue which totaled $1,925,166 in revenue for the 24-25 fiscal year. The total amount available in the fund as of this writing is $4,344,116. This fund provides much-needed capital investment revenue for the library system.

Last year, the Willits Roof and Alternative Energy Project was evaluated in order to qualify as an official California Energy Savings Program to reduce energy use, carbon emissions, and operational costs. However, due to the cost of the roof and the battery, the project expenses outweighed the savings and couldn't be completed before the grant deadline. To meet the deadline of the California State Library grant and replace the roof, the Board of Supervisors and the grantor approved the change of the grant scope to replace the library roof only. The architectural specifications for the Request For Proposal (RFP) have been completed, and the library roof replacement is expected to be completed by fall 2025.

Capital investment purchases completed last year included space-saving all-in-one Toshiba color printers for Round Valley Library, Willits Library, and Coast Community Library.

Some projects from FY 24-25 are being carried forward into the next fiscal year. Included are funds for the Ukiah Expansion Feasibility study. An Ad Hoc Committee comprised of two members of the Library Advisory Board, a County Supervisor, two library staff members, a City of Ukiah Deputy Manager, and a library patron is tasked with narrowing the scope of the Ukiah Expansion Feasibility Study to no more than two to three options.

In the meantime, the natural shifting of the Ukiah Library building has caused the front doors to misalign and is causing repeated problems with opening and closing. The Ukiah Library storefront entry project is moving forward as a priority safety issue. It requires replacement of the glass storefront and new entry pavement, which will extend to the mural wall to provide space for outdoor programming and for the exterior book drop.

Additionally, since the current bookmobile requires many repairs and is nearing the end of its life, a new bookmobile has been budgeted for the next fiscal year. A patron survey was sent out, and public meetings were held last year, both inland and at the coast, to hear what patrons would like for their new bookmobile. The process may take up to a year or more for the bookmobile to be constructed.

Barb Chapman, Administrative Services Manager

(Note – the fiscal year 24-25 has not closed as of this report, and amounts may be updated.)

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

As Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as well as an educator, I am pleased to share a few new programs initiated by Mendocino County Library over the last fiscal year. Our six Mendocino County Library branches and Bookmobile educate and inspire, enriching the lives of county residents by providing a wide range of free services and items to borrow.

One of the programs begun last year is the Student Success Card. This state-mandated program involves the California State Library, school districts, and public libraries in ensuring that each student in the state has access to a library card by the third grade. In Mendocino County, all students from pre-K to seniors in high school within participating school districts will automatically have a library card number connected to their student ID. Through the Library, students are also provided with free educational help including online live tutoring, support with homework questions, and a writing lab, as well as access to a multitude of books, professional journals, and research materials. Four districts are already participating, and more are expected to get involved in the next few months.

The Library recently kicked off Library by Mail, a free service offered to homebound residents in Mendocino County to access Library books, books on CD, music CDs, and DVDs through the mail. Plus, the Library is continuing to reach out to residents in all areas of the County who may not have easy access to a Library branch.

In the spring, through a Save the Children grant, the Library provided bilingual StoryWalks® displaying book pages in the windows of local businesses. It was an active, fun way for our communities to walk and read their way through an entire story. This project supported early literacy as well as physical fitness, child/caregiver interaction, and engagement with local businesses and community partners.

These are just a few of the accomplishments of the Library over the past year. The Library's Annual Report is filled with more highlights that explain how this government institution continues to cultivate our communities.

John Haschak, 3rd District Supervisor and Chair

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

MELLISA HANNUM
County Librarian and Branch Manager, Coast Community

BARB CHAPMAN
Administrative Services Manager

MELISSA CARR
Branch Manager, Ukiah

DANIEL HESS
Branch Manager, Fort Bragg

DENISE JESSIE
Branch Manager, Willits & Laytonville

JOSH BENNETT
Branch Manager, Round Valley

NAYO SICARD
Branch Manager, Bookmobile & Outreach

Top: Branch Manager Josh Bennett presents at the Best Small Library in America event at the Round Valley Branch. Bottom: County Librarian Mellisa Hannum and Administrative Services Manager Barb Chapman at the Ukiah Branch.