



HARTFORD
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT

JUNE 2026

FISCAL YEAR 2025–26
THIRD QUARTER
(JANUARY - MARCH 2026)

PAGE NO.

Overview	1
Finance	2
Development	5
Public Services	8
The American Place	20
Social Services	24
HPL Studios	25
Culture & Communications	26
Human Resources	34
Capital Projects	36
Statistics	37



At a glance



124,576 total visits

51,243 items checked out

20,936 wifi sessions

17,060 computer sessions

14,174 program participants

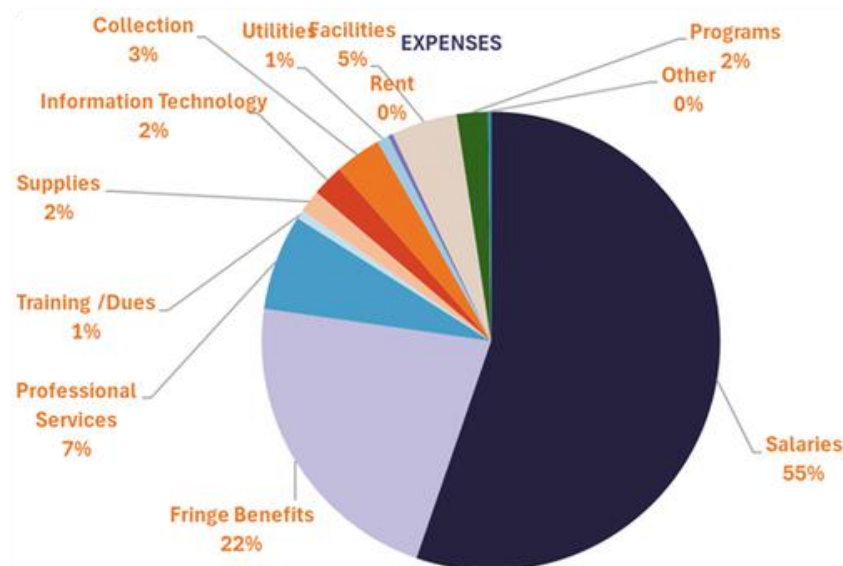
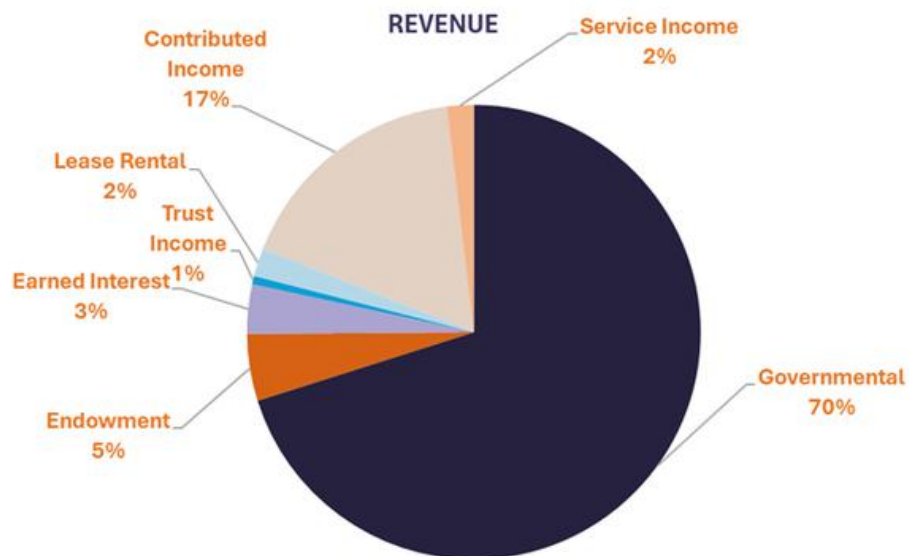
15,365 reference questions answered

FISCAL YEAR 2026 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

MARCH 31, 2026

For the period ending 3/31/26 (75% through the fiscal year), Hartford Public Library has expended a total of \$10,736,274 which represents 78.4% of the adopted budget of \$13,689,219. HPL has also collected \$10,693,954, or 78.1% of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

Account	Budget	Actual	Variance	% of Budget Collected/Expended
Revenue	\$ 13,689,219	\$ 10,693,954	\$ 2,995,266	78.1%
Expense	\$ 13,689,219	\$ 10,736,274	\$ 2,952,945	78.4%
Variance	\$ -	\$ (42,321)	\$ 42,321	



Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Report - as of March 31, 2026

Revenue	BUDGET FY25	ACTUAL FY25	VARIANCE	% VARIANCE
Governmental				
City of Hartford	\$ 9,997,627	\$ 7,498,220	\$ 2,499,407	75.0%
State Library Support	\$ 1,400	\$ -	\$ 1,400	0.0%
Subtotal	\$ 9,999,027	\$ 7,498,220	\$ 2,500,807	75.0%
Endowment				
Restricted	\$ 310,405	\$ 116,346	\$ 194,059	37.5%
Unrestricted	\$ 523,846	\$ 392,883	\$ 130,963	75.0%
Subtotal	\$ 834,251	\$ 509,229	\$ 325,022	61.0%
Earned Interest (Endowmen	\$ 350,000	\$ 375,762	\$ (25,762)	107.4%
Subtotal	\$ 350,000	\$ 375,762	\$ (25,762)	107.4%
Trust Income	\$ 80,000	\$ 62,991	\$ 17,009	78.7%
Subtotal	\$ 80,000	\$ 62,991	\$ 17,009	78.7%
Lease/Rental				
Verizon Lease	\$ 41,527	\$ 31,546	\$ 9,981	76.0%
Café Rental	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ 6,000	0.0%
UConn Rental	\$ 215,414	\$ 161,561	\$ 53,853	75.0%
Room Rental	\$ 15,000	\$ 13,620	\$ 1,380	90.8%
HPATV Rental	\$ 12,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 4,000	66.7%
Subtotal	\$ 289,941	\$ 214,727	\$ 75,214	74.1%
Contributed Income				
Individual	\$ 400,000	\$ 388,413	\$ 11,587	97.1%
Corporate	\$ 400,000	\$ 748,009	\$ (348,009)	187.0%
Foundation	\$ 400,000	\$ 278,788	\$ 121,212	69.7%
Government Grants	\$ 619,000	\$ 412,729	\$ 206,271	66.7%
Subtotal	\$ 1,819,000	\$ 1,827,939	\$ (8,939)	100.5%
Service Income				
Digital Library Lab	\$ 150,000	\$ 24,458	\$ 125,542	16.3%
Guard Card Program	\$ 15,000	\$ 11,805	\$ 3,195	78.7%
Passport Services	\$ 50,000	\$ 11,585	\$ 38,415	23.2%
Immigration Services	\$ 35,000	\$ 46,530	\$ (11,530)	132.9%
Desk Receipts	\$ 65,000	\$ 53,175	\$ 11,825	81.8%
Store Sales	\$ 2,000	\$ 159	\$ 1,841	100.0%
Other	\$ -	\$ 57,373	\$ (57,373)	100.0%
Subtotal	\$ 317,000	\$ 205,085	\$ 111,915	64.7%
Total	\$ 13,689,219	\$ 10,693,954	\$ 2,995,266	78.1%
Expense				
Salaries	\$ 8,143,854	\$ 5,935,200	\$ 2,208,654	72.9%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 2,531,076	\$ 2,359,078	\$ 171,998	93.2%
Professional Services	\$ 649,864	\$ 724,766	\$ (74,902)	111.5%
Training/Dues	\$ 82,432	\$ 66,075	\$ 16,357	80.2%
Supplies	\$ 165,600	\$ 172,880	\$ (7,280)	104.4%
Information Technology	\$ 403,214	\$ 241,638	\$ 161,576	59.9%
Collection	\$ 575,792	\$ 352,764	\$ 223,028	61.3%
Utilities	\$ 125,307	\$ 88,052	\$ 37,255	70.3%
Rent	\$ 37,080	\$ 38,000	\$ (920)	102.5%
Facilities	\$ 670,000	\$ 499,149	\$ 170,851	74.5%
Programs	\$ 305,000	\$ 238,018	\$ 66,982	78.0%
Other	\$ -	\$ 20,655	\$ -	0.0%
Total	\$ 13,689,219	\$ 10,736,274	\$ 2,952,945	78.4%
Variance	\$ -	\$ (42,321)	\$ 42,321	

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION**MARCH 31, 2026 and 2025**

	<u>3/31/2026</u>	<u>3/31/2025</u>
ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 1,140,823	\$ 943,677
Investments	\$ 31,820,995	\$ 34,370,722
Accounts Receivable	\$ 8,158,003	\$ 8,729,600
Contributions Receivable	\$ 595,443	\$ 384,648
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 176,161	\$ 40,920
Property and Equipment, Net	\$ 13,783,487	\$ 10,959,972
Right of Use Assets - Operating, Net	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 40,722</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 55,674,911</u>	<u>\$ 55,470,262</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 539	\$ 213
Deferred Revenue	\$ -	\$ -
Lease Liabilities - Operating	<u>\$ 4,000</u>	<u>\$ 44,722</u>
Total Liabilities	\$ 4,539	\$ 44,935
NET ASSETS		
With and Without Donor Restrictions	<u>\$ 55,670,372</u>	<u>\$ 55,425,327</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>\$ 55,670,372</u>	<u>\$ 55,425,327</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 55,674,911</u>	<u>\$ 55,470,262</u>

DEVELOPMENT

GRANTS

In Q3, the Library received \$423,594 in awarded program grants (consisting of foundation corporate, federal, and state grants).

Fiscal Year	Restricted and Unrestricted "Grants"	Annual Fund/BB	Annual Fund Restricted	Legacy	Beyond Words 2025 (gross)*	Beyond Words 2026 (gross)**	Total
2023	\$3,150,362	\$96,603	\$9,925	\$11,612	\$281,703		\$3,550,205
2024	\$1,611,344	\$143,503	\$8,370	\$3,854	\$315,516		\$2,082,587
2025	\$1,784,559	\$94,961	\$7,634	\$0	\$365,905		\$2,253,058
2026	\$1,356,105	\$73,824	\$17,543	\$0	\$354,761	\$26,750	\$1,802,234
2026 Goal	\$1,000,000	\$175,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$1,560,000
% to Goal	136%	42%	70%	0%	101%	8%	116%

*BW25 Total is as of 3/31/2026

**BW26 totals will be counted in FY27.

CAPITAL FUNDING Philanthropy		
	RRR	Barbour Library
Raise to Date	\$ 4,768,044	
Phil. Goal	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
% to Goal	95%	0%
CAPITAL FUNDING Government		
2024		\$ 2,000,000
2025	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -
2026	\$ 600,000	\$ 5,000,000
TOTAL	\$ 5,600,000	
Gov't Goal	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
% to Goal	93%	100%

*The City of Hartford has 9.5 million invested in the project.

AWARDED GRANTS

Government Grants

The ReConnect CT Digital Pathways Program for justice-involved grant, in the amount of \$318,594, is a combination of state funding, through the UConn IMRP (Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy), as well as federal ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding.

Foundation Grants

A Liberty Bank Foundation grant, in the amount of \$15,000 for Building Community Capital: Pathways to Digital Literacy, Banking, and Entrepreneurship.

Corporate Grants

The Hartford grant, in the amount of \$90,000, will continue to support the work at West Middle Elementary school including Boundless Libraries and addition of The American Place adult learning, workforce, career development, and small business support.

Pending Grants

There is \$149,369 in pending grants for this period.

- Ensworth Foundation Bank of American - \$15,000 for HPL Grand Reopening Week
- City of Hartford HUD (CDBG) – \$72,369 for Workforce and Business Development, ServSafe
- Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation - Jimmie Grant - \$10,000 for general operating support
- Greater Hartford Gives Foundation - \$17,000 for civic participation and system wide voter registration
- Aurora Foundation - \$25,000 for TAP programming, Barriers Can't Stop Us

HAPPENINGS OF NOTE

On March 17, The Cigna Group's marketing team visited Hartford Public Library for a video shoot featuring Angel and Nilda to highlight the impact of the "Health on the Go" initiative which was a \$198,476 grant from The Cigna Group Foundation's Health Equity Impact Fund. The funding supports social services staff and provides no cost transportation for Hartford community members to attend health and wellness appointments. To date, 100,000 rides have been used by the community through this program. The video featured customers Angel and Nilda.



HAPPENINGS OF NOTE ANGEL & NILDA: FINDING PEACE OF MIND

Angel and Nilda first came to Hartford Public Library looking for help and a path forward. Through the Library's social support program, they were connected to critical resources, including free transportation to life-saving appointments.

"I didn't qualify for transportation," Angel shared. "So we had to decide which appointments we had enough money to get to—we shouldn't have to weigh our options. You should be able to go to all your appointments."

For Angel and Nilda, finding joy means peace of mind—being able to focus on what matters most: their health and a sense of stability for their family.

On February 10, the Downtown Library hosted a book discussion by former Board member Suzanne Hopgood. Over 96 individuals registered for the event.

AUTHOR TALK

Hartford Public Library was recently honored to welcome longtime Hartford resident, former HPL Board member, and author Suzanne Hopgood to celebrate her new book, *Get Your Own Coffeed: Underestimated, Overlooked, and Now the Boss*.



In conversation with Chion Wold of WNPR, Suzanne shared reflections on her leadership journey and the power of perseverance. Thank you to all who joined us for this inspiring evening of conversation and community at HPL.

A special thank you to The Mark Twain House & Museum for partnering with Hartford Public Library as our onsite booksellers for the author event.

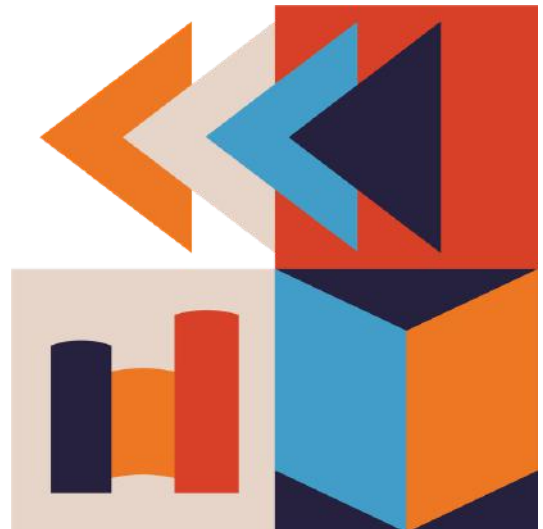
A BRIGHTER SPACE FOR YOUNG LEARNERS



HPL's Children's Departments welcome large groups of students each day. The rugs in the spaces were in need of replacement—worn and undersized—making it difficult to comfortably accommodate young learners during programs and activities.

Thanks to the generosity of Bob's Discount Furniture, the Barbour, Dwight and Ropkins Libraries now feel brighter and more inviting—creating welcoming spaces where children can sit, explore, and engage together.

HPL is grateful for this support, which helps us continue providing environments where children and families can learn, connect, and grow.



PUBLIC SERVICES

ELEVATING THE EXPERIENCE: REOPENING THE SECOND FLOOR

In March, the reopening of the Downtown Library's second floor marked a significant milestone in efforts to provide a welcoming, functional space for all community members. This revitalized floor offers expanded collections and ample seating, including a dedicated zone for young adults to study, collaborate, and explore a curated selection. Library staff worked to unpack, categorize, and reorganize the second-floor collection. This careful preparation set the stage for the official reopening, offering an environment conducive to discovery and productivity.

A centerpiece of this reopening was the highly anticipated return of bookable study rooms. Recognizing frequent customer requests for private spaces for meetings, focused study, and quiet collaboration, the Library restored this vital resource. The community response was immediate: in March, 200 study room reservations were recorded. These spaces fulfill a deep-seated need for quiet, productive environments within the heart of the city.

BEYOND BOOKS: A HUB FOR HEALTH

HPL reaffirmed its commitment to community well-being by transforming branches into vital hubs for health and dignity. Recognizing that a thriving community requires accessible care, the Library continued to connect customers with essential, free health resources in trusted local spaces.

- **Monthly Screenings:** The Downtown, Albany, and Camp Field Libraries hosted Hartford's Department of Health and Human Services for free and confidential screenings.
- **Regular Testing:** The Health Collective provided testing every other Tuesday at the Park Street Library @ the Lyric.
- **Accessibility:** To ensure services remained accessible, no registration or appointments were required; walk-ins were welcomed at every session.
- **Hygiene Support:** The system distributed 140 Dignity Grows totes, providing individuals and families with necessary toiletry products.

Looking ahead, this mission of holistic support continues to grow. In April, the Wheeler Mobile Medical Unit offered on-site care on Thursday afternoons in Unity Plaza—a vital new collaboration with Barbour Library.

51,243

items checked out

20,936

WiFi sessions

14,174

computer sessions

15,365

reference questions
answered

287

documents
notarized

130

municipal
IDs created



STITCHING COMMUNITY TOGETHER: THE RESURGENCE OF FIBER ART

Reflecting the modern resurgence of traditional crafts, several locations became vibrant hubs for knitting enthusiasts. The Downtown and Dwight Libraries hosted hand-knitting workshops led by local instructor Wilma Hoffman, who guided 16 crafters through refining techniques and mastering new stitches.

A particular highlight was the opportunity to empower a community member at the Barbour Library. A neighborhood resident led two loom-knitting classes, providing a professional platform to develop group instruction skills. These workshops represent the Library's dual mission: providing a space for residents to gain hands-on skills while actively investing in the professional growth and talents of local people.

THE ART OF CONNECTION: HANDS-ON CRAFTING AND COMMUNITY

Beyond fiber arts, locations saw a surge in overall participation in crafting. From candle making at Camp Field and Irish soda bread workshops at Albany to the "She Creates" Women's History tote bag program at Park Street, these hands-on happenings transformed branches into vibrant makerspaces.

- **Ropkins Library:** Building on the momentum of a weekly Black History Month film series in February, Ropkins saw a packed March calendar featuring workshops in Granny Squares, Resin Coasters, and Tea Blending. These sessions fostered "repeat attendance," with customers returning weekly to master new skills.
- **Dwight Library:** Residents were invited to transform the building's glass facade into a collaborative mural. This initiative beautified the architecture and restored a sense of pride to a bustling intersection. The sight of participants from all generations sharing conversation while painting reaffirmed the Library's role as a "third space"—a place where people can gather and take ownership of their neighborhood's identity.



SPRING HAS SPRUNG

As winter faded in March, the Library hosted three hands-on seed-starting workshops in collaboration with community partner KNOX Hartford. Local urban farmers led these beginner-friendly sessions, focusing on techniques for starting and caring for seedlings indoors.

Beyond practical lessons, the team shared information about local community garden plots and distributed applications. The program's success was reflected in a strong turnout:

- **Albany Library:** 29 participants
- **Park Street Library @ the Lyric:** 13 participants
- **Barbour Library:** 14 participants



Every attendee left equipped with seeds already planted in pots, as well as extra seed packets to continue gardening at home.

EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH THE LOW

Despite winter weather, the Library on Wheels (LOW) team conducted 35 outreach activities to support the community. For the senior population, winter weather often makes it unsafe or undesirable to leave home. The LOW team maintained library access via community centers and apartment complexes.

A standout moment highlights the personal impact of these visits. During a routine stop at an assisted living community, staff met a resident eager to explore digital offerings. While she was successfully registered for a library card, she found the initial setup of the Libby app challenging. A follow-up visit was arranged where a staff member worked one-on-one with her to install the app and connect her new card. During the most recent visit, she shared how much she enjoys the service, proving that personalized care can open a world of digital possibilities for isolated neighbors.



PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

The Public Programming Department offered a total of 45 in-person programs with a total attendance of 2,674 attendees and over 13,792 views.

ARTS & CREATIVE EXPRESSION

A cornerstone of HPL programming, Baby Grand Jazz is a long-running, free concert series that brings nationally recognized and emerging jazz artists to the community in an intimate, welcoming setting. Held on Sunday afternoons, the series celebrates the rich legacy and ongoing evolution of jazz while making live music accessible to all. Baby Grand Jazz continues to serve as a vibrant cultural gathering space, connecting audiences through the power of music and shared experience.

Get Creative with Tania hands-on workshop series invites participants to explore their creativity through a variety of engaging, skill-building projects led by Tania. From customizing planners and designing Cricut tote bags to crafting melt-and-pour soaps, each session offers a welcoming space to learn new techniques, express personal style, and create something unique to take home. Designed for all skill levels, Get Creative with Tania fosters creativity, confidence, and community through accessible, fun, and practical art-making experiences.

In partnership with 224 EcoSpace and Artists of Color Accelerate, Created to Create offered participants aged 12 and up an opportunity to explore a range of artistic expressions in a supportive, collaborative environment. From music production to poetry writing, the program encouraged creativity, self-expression, and skill-building while uplifting diverse voices and fostering community through the arts.

In partnership with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Press Play offered an engaging live music experience featuring a professional string quartet performance. The program brought classical music into an accessible, intimate setting, allowing audiences to connect with the artistry and versatility of orchestral musicians while fostering a deeper appreciation for live performance and the arts.

Open Mic Night invited poets, musicians, and performers to share their voices in a welcoming, creative space. Hosted by Hydro8sixty, the program celebrated emerging and established talent, fostering self-expression, community connection, and artistic collaboration.

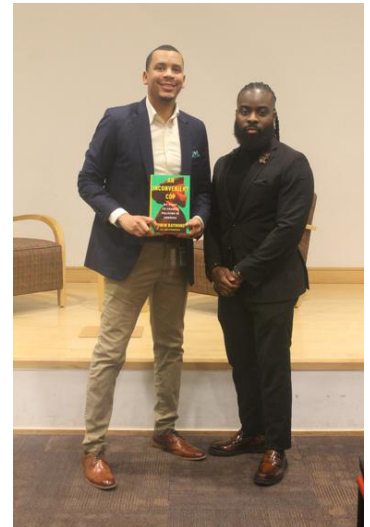
CULTURAL HERITAGE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Reading for Change (in partnership with the Stowe Center for Literary Activism) brought the community together through a powerful, thought-provoking conversation with Edwin Raymond, author of *An Inconvenient Cop: My Fight to Change Policing in America*. In dialogue with Michael Mallery Jr., the program explored the realities of modern policing, systemic inequities, and the personal cost of speaking truth to power. The event highlighted the role of storytelling as a tool for accountability, empathy, and social change.

Presented in partnership with the Greater Hartford Alliance of Black Social Workers and the Black Social Work Film Festival, the Black Love Film Series celebrated Black History Month through film and dialogue. The series showcased films that explore the depth, complexity, and beauty of Black relationships, family, and community, followed by facilitated panel discussions.

Lift Every Voice and Drum centered the theme of Black Joy through a dynamic afternoon of performance and storytelling. The program featured the Bloomfield High School Gospel Choir, alongside artists including Kolton Harris, Cornell Lewis (African Drumming), and T'challa Williams (poetry).

In partnership with the University of Connecticut, Tracing Trailblazers featured a docu-series exploring the history and evolution of UConn's Muslim community. Created by a student researcher, the project draws on oral histories from alumni spanning the past half century, highlighting experiences of accommodation, activism, and identity on campus.



COMMUNITY SERVICE & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In partnership with Community Renewal Team (CRT), Journey Home, and Kamora's Cultural Corner, the Letters of Hope: MLK Day of Service program invited participants to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. through collective action. Attendees engaged with local organizations, viewed a documentary on Dr. King's life, and contributed to a letter-writing campaign for educators and members of the unhoused community.

In partnership with 86GO, Hartford Public Library hosted the Hartford Black Heroes Trail Community Run, a community run and walk beginning at the Downtown Library patio. Participants of all fitness levels joined together for a morning of movement, following Hartford's Heroes Trail and engaging with the city's history and landmarks along the route.

CULINARY ARTS & WELLNESS

From Page to Plate is a monthly cookbook club that brings people together to explore new recipes and share the experience of cooking and conversation. Featuring *Half Baked Harvest: Quick & Cozy* by Tieghan Gerard, participants prepared and sampled dishes while exchanging ideas and techniques.

Create Your Own Signature Tea hands-on program invited participants to explore the art of tea blending through guided tasting and experimentation. Attendees sampled a variety of loose-leaf teas and herbs before crafting their own personalized signature blend to take home.



PUBLIC SERVICES continued

In partnership with Black Futures Tech and Mercado Popular, Hartford Plates: Film Screening & Discussion featured a screening and conversation around Hartford Plates: A Story of Food Apartheid and Solutions in Hartford, CT. The program explored issues of food access, equity, and community-driven solutions.

GROWTH & LITERARY DIALOGUE

Keeping a Commonplace Book reflective workshop introduced participants to the historical and practical art of keeping a commonplace book—a personal collection of quotes, ideas, and reflections. The program encouraged attendees to begin their own books as a space for curiosity, creativity, and lifelong reflection.

Author Talk: Laura Tillman – The Migrant Chef featured journalist Laura Tillman in conversation about her book The Migrant Chef: The Life and Times of the World's Greatest Chef. The program explored the intersections of food, migration, identity, and labor through the lens of one chef's story and the broader global food system.

Affirmation Vision Boards interactive workshop invited participants to reflect, set intentions, and visualize their goals through the creation of personalized affirmation vision boards. The program fostered mindfulness and empowerment, providing a supportive space for individuals to focus on personal growth.



YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Youth Services delivered 444 programs across the library system, serving 6,017 participants. This represents a 16% increase in programs offered compared to the same quarter last year. Programming focused on literacy, STEM education, and community engagement through environmental science, creative arts, and computational thinking. The Youth Services Outreach Librarian conducted seven story times and completed 12 Early Learning Centers book deliveries.

EARLY LITERACY

Early literacy programming delivered 102 programs serving 1,469 participants. Camp Field Library implemented monthly outreach at Metzner and Hyland Early Learning Centers, reaching approximately 40-60 children.

Barbour Library focused on developmental standards for children ages 0-5, delivering hands-on programming that integrated language, music, and motor skills, including a Martin Luther King Jr. story time centered on friendship and inclusion.

Downtown Library launched the Work It Out @ Your Library initiative, introducing preschool-aged children to computational thinking through a PBS KIDS curriculum. Two units with 46 participants were completed with the program currently scaling for systemwide coverage.



YOUTH READING & LITERACY PROGRAMS

Downtown Library's Popcorn & PJs Virtual Family Storytime had significant growth, distributing 150 activity boxes through partnerships with Read to Grow and RSCO. This increased capacity led to high engagement, with 144 active participants interacting directly with authors and developing literacy skills.

At the Boundless Library @ Rawson, which recorded 3,078 visits with 1,304 books circulated, Boundless Librarian conducted 89 programs with 1,142 students and teachers. In February, she hosted a "Yetis Are the Worst!" story time focused on vocabulary and social-emotional growth.

Dwight Library hosted Parkville Community School visits where third graders studied local geography, while fourth and fifth graders analyzed historical context clues through a custom game, Oldest & Newest, and explored mythology via "exquisite corpse" art, successfully combining creative expression with critical thinking. The Boundless Library @ West Middle, which recorded 2,481 visits with over 1,852 books circulated, saw Boundless Librarian conduct 148 programs with 2,448 students and teachers. Students applied literacy skills during a pizza-making workshop and mastered literary devices through a figurative language matching game.

STEM EDUCATION & INNOVATION

Children's Museum Partnerships

Downtown Library families engaged in high-impact STEM programming via the Children's Museum. In February, 25 participants explored avian biology by dissecting owl pellets. March's weeklong Spring Mobile Makerspace drew 44 attendees who used 3D printers and chop saws to create jewelry, sculptures, and rockets.

The Boundless Library @ West Middle hosted sessions on physics, electrical safety, and astronomy. The Boundless Library @ Rawson provided an immersive StarLab planetarium experience for 3rd and 4th graders. Guided by museum educators, students explored constellations and lunar landings, successfully bridging science with their studies of Galileo and mythology.

Ropkins Library expanded its impact through weekly hands-on workshops, reaching over 400 students via the museum partnership and earning high praise from local educators and families.

Science and Math Programming

Barbour Library fostered scientific curiosity through its "Snowy STEM" program, where participants explored physical principles through interactive experiments like "exploding snowmen" and "blizzards in a bottle." Campfield Library partnered with Naylor School for STEM Night, where 25 participants learned coding and robotics using Ozobots.

Park Library's "Hip-Hip Hooray: Pi Day Celebration!" introduced mathematical concepts to 17 participants through interactive displays and hands-on activities, successfully combining academic learning with a community pie-tasting. Dwight Library's January Pick a Project program explored states of matter through hands-on slime and melted crayon art.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & OUTREACH

RSCO and School Choice Support

In January, Odeta transitioned to full-time as School Choice Coordinator, expanding full-day office hours at the Downtown Library and Albany, Park, and Camp Field branches. This shift prioritized application assistance during the open enrollment window, including participation in regional School Choice Fairs. Through RSCO support, the Library increased capacity for family events, reaching 40 additional families. The quarter concluded with 65 completed applications and 755 total participants across all related programming.

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Take Your Child to the Library Day

HPL celebrated Take Your Child to the Library Day from February 2-7, 2026, with families gathering for a vibrant celebration featuring a Pete the Cat appearance and a live llama visit, alongside interactive stations for slime-making, comic workshops, and scavenger hunts, as well as a Regional School Choice Office fair. Over 250 children and parents participated.

Black History and Cultural Programming

Barbour Library engaged children ages 6-12 through cultural enrichment with programming emphasizing Black history. A successful African drumming workshop drew 15 participants, and a Martin Luther King Jr. "Peace Crafts" session centered on collaborative art fostered community building.

Seasonal and Creative Events

Campfield Library's weekly engagement remained strong through Craft Corner and the Thursday Fun Zone, with popular activities including Mardi Gras masks and beaded caterpillars establishing a loyal group of regular attendees. Successful "Spring Fling" events utilized scavenger hunts and salt paintings.

Park Library's holiday-themed programming combined creative expression with community building through DIY card-making and cookie-decorating events. Custom photo backdrops for Valentine's cards and hands-on dessert decorating engaged 27 participants and informed future initiatives, including an upcoming "Nailed It" dessert decorating challenge.

Albany Library successfully bridged generational gaps through 7 all-ages programs welcoming 273 attendees, while 24 active youth programs drew 194 participants and 29 passive activities engaged another 182.



COMMUNITY WELLNESS & ENRICHMENT

The Outreach Librarian expanded community impact by coordinating 7th-grade field trips with Milner Middle School, introducing students to Downtown Library resources through hands-on zine workshops. Creative enrichment was provided via jewelry-making sessions led by Capitol Squash. A collaboration with Black Girl Achieve fostered a supportive environment for teen programming focused on empowerment and identity development.

Ropkins Library's "Healthy Habits" series with the National Institutes of Health and creative workshops with The Village addressed vital wellness and arts gaps for local students.

Sustainability Initiatives

Gardner's House Inc. expanded the Children's Room with a second garden tower, adding strawberries and squash to the thriving kale and herb harvest while initiating a new tower installation at the Camp Field Library. The Garden Club of Hartford installed two raised beds in the Children's Room featuring Indian cuisine staples like cilantro and peppers. These interactive green spaces have become major points of interest and are set to anchor upcoming Big Read programming in April.

TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

Q3 focused on advancing immersive technology, enhancing niche collections, and fostering youth leadership across the library system. YOUmedia in Downtown gained national recognition with the "Memory Tree" VR project, while YOUmedia at Albany deepened its community impact through a student-led film festival and workforce development. Across the branches, staff utilized "tinkering" models—combining media with hands-on activities—to create welcoming, high-engagement environments.

CREATIVE ARTS & SELF-EXPRESSION

Visual Arts & Exhibition

YOUmedia at Albany, creative programming flourished through tactile art, jewelry making, and collage. The quarter culminated in a large-scale exhibition centered on identity and cultural expression. Creative technology also took center stage at Downtown, where teens contributed concept designs for virtual reality environments, gaining exposure to professional game design workflows.

Tactile & Decorative Arts

Hands-on engagement proved a successful hook for teen retention. Camp Field Library launched a monthly partnership featuring LEGO kits and customizable journals, drawing 13 participants. Barbour Library hosted a highly successful "Anti-Valentine's Day" event where 16 teens created felt broken hearts and enjoyed "anything but sweet" snacks. At Park Library, Studio Ghibli film screenings were paired with themed LEGO sets and puzzles, proving that "tinkering" while watching media is a preferred format for teen socializing.

DIGITAL CREATION & TECHNOLOGY

Music Production & Audio Engineering

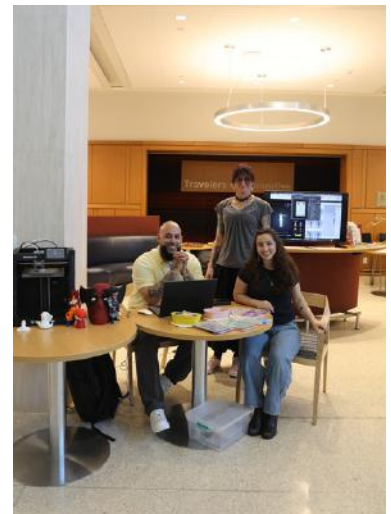
Music production remained a pillar of engagement at YOUmedia Downtown. Mentors provided consistent one-on-one support, helping teens build technical skills in beat making and digital media creation. New promotional studio showcases were developed to expand the visibility of teen work to the broader community.

Game Design, VR & 3D Modeling

A standout achievement this quarter was the "Memory Tree" VR project, which originated at the MIT Reality Hackathon and earned "Best Design" recognition. Under the guidance of YOUmedia Manager, teens moved beyond consumption to creation, using Unity and VR development tools to build interactive stories. The Dwight Library also hosted VR gaming sessions following staff training, seeing high sign-up rates for individual timeslots. Ropkins Library introduced 3D printing and button makers to better align with local teen interests.

Film & Video Production

YOUmedia at Albany saw significant success in media programming, culminating in a student-led film festival. The event drew over 50 attendees and celebrated youth achievement through awards and community recognition, highlighting the power of giving teens ownership over their creative output.



LITERACY & CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Anime, Manga & Japanese Culture

The expansion of the second-floor manga collection served as a major driver for circulation and sustained interest. At Barbour, the weekly Anime Club expanded to include structured activities such as painting "Soot Sprite" coasters and celebrating "National Mario Day" on the Nintendo Switch. These programs continue to be the most consistent way to connect fans of the genre and drive library usage.

Pop Culture & Community Events

Branches utilized pop culture as a bridge to social-emotional growth. Barbour's National Popcorn Day Movie Night provided a warm space during a cold week, where 9 teens voted on films and built community. Camp Field and Ropkins both utilized board games and puzzles to encourage "drop-in" engagement, turning the Library into a "third space" for teens to decompress after school.

SAFE SPACE & TRUSTED SPACE

Mentorship & Workforce Readiness

YOUmedia at Albany, individualized support helped students improve behavior, build confidence, and take on leadership roles. Workforce development was a critical focus, with students receiving guidance on resumes and professional readiness, leading to several teens securing external employment.

Academic & Social-Emotional Support

The "Ask Away with Amber and Aden" program Downtown provided a supportive, discussion-based space for teens to connect with trusted adults. Mentors across all sites prioritized holistic youth support, ensuring that participants facing personal challenges remained connected to library resources and felt a sense of ownership and belonging.



EDUCATIONAL & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

HPL maintained strong ties with ROCA and NextStreet to provide driver's education for opportunity youth. Ongoing collaborations with Impact Academy and ESL programs ensured that multilingual learners and students from across Hartford had equitable access to services. Additionally, YOUmedia at Albany strengthened its collegiate pathways through a partnership with the University of Hartford Esports program, exposing teens to competitive gaming and higher education opportunities.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

The third quarter of fiscal year 2026 showed a slight 4% decline in total circulation (30,451 → 29,361 items) but revealed significant shifts in customer behavior. Digital streaming continued displacing physical DVDs, manga completely dominated youth reading, and career-focused resources surged. Museum passes became the Library's most popular non-book item, and the Library on Wheels circulation exploded with 525% growth.

525%

Library on Wheels Growth
Major expansion in outreach circulation

78%

Museum Pass Growth
Strong demand for cultural access

30%

Video Streaming Growth
Digital viewing continues to rise

29%

Digital Magazine Growth
Increased engagement with periodicals

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

- **Total New Titles:** 4,681 new items added (2% decrease from FY25 Q3)

CIRCULATION PERFORMANCE

Total circulation reached 29,361 items, down 4% from FY25 Q3 (30,451 items). Slight system-wide decline, driven by branch decreases despite strong gains Downtown and Library on Wheels.

Library	FY25 Q3	FY26 Q3	Diff %
Downtown	10,277	12,492	22%
Albany	4,970	3,241	-35%
Dwight	3,534	3,155	-11%
Campfield	2,419	2,077	-14%
West Middle	2,272	1,839	-19%
Park	1,936	1,838	-5%
Barbour	1,937	1,766	-9%
Rawson	1,565	1,183	-24%
LOW	149	931	525%
Ropkins	1,318	687	-48%
Book Locker	74	152	105%
Total	30,451	29,361	-4%

CIRCULATION BY ITEM TYPE

- **Museum Passes are a Hot Ticket:** Circulation of museum passes increased by 78%, making them the most popular non-book item by far.
- **Youth Reading Shifts:** While Manga is up, circulation for "Beginning Reader" books dropped significantly by 43%.

DIGITAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

Digital consumption grew modestly by **2%** (11,096 → 11,265 uses).

Standout Performers

- Videos: 30% increase (761 → 988 uses) via Kanopy
- Magazines: 29% increase (1,451 → 1,866 uses)

Format	FY25 Q3	FY26 Q3	Diff %
Audiobooks	3,177	3,332	5%
Songs	3,186	2,859	-10%
eBooks	2,126	2,151	1%
Magazines	1,451	1,866	29%
Videos	761	988	30%
Comics	395	69	-83%
Total	11,096	11,265	2%

DATABASE USAGE

Total database usage fell **30%** (85,548 → 60,012 uses). Widely varying usage of Bookflix is the cause of the largest drop. Bookflix sometimes does not provide a full report of stats until months after the quarter has closed so the usage number is subject to change. Digital access to the **New York Times** was added this quarter and we expect use to continue to grow.

POPULAR CONTENT TRENDS

- **New York Times:** 2,912 uses (new resource) - monthly usage nearly tripled from January (528) to March (1,487)
- **Job & Career Accelerator:** 141% increase (29 → 70 uses)
- **World Book:** 141% increase (753 → 1,818 uses)
- **LearningExpress:** 103% increase (36 → 73 uses)
- **ProQuest Historical Hartford Courant:** 50% increase (1,749 → 2,624 uses)

POPULAR CONTENT TRENDS

Youth and Teen

100% of the top 10 youth and teen titles are manga or graphic novels once again this quarter.

Title	Author	Audience	Genre	Checkouts
Blue Lock	Muneyuki Kaneshiro	TEEN	Manga	143
Demon Slayer	Koyoharu Gotoge	TEEN	Manga	125
My Hero Academia	Kōhe Horikoshi	TEEN	Manga	114
One Piece	Eiichiro Oda	TEEN	Manga	91
Kaiju No. 8	Naoya Matsumoto	TEEN	Manga	64
Toilet-Bound Hanako-Kun	AidaIro	TEEN	Manga	64
The Baby-Sitters Club	Arley Nopra	YOUTH	Graphic Novel	62
Spy x Family	Tatsuya Endō	TEEN	Manga	59
Jujutsu Kaisen	Gege Akutami	TEEN	Manga	58
Naruto	Masashi Kishimoto	TEEN	Manga	57

Adult

Dandadan (manga) remained #1 for adults with 41 checkouts, but traditional self-help titles showed staying power.

Title	Author	Genre	Checkouts
Dandadan	Yukinobu Tatsu	Manga	41
Invincible	Robert Kirkman	Graphic Novels	27
The Emperor of Gladness: A Novel	Ocean Vuong	Book	19
The Correspondent: A Novel	Virginia Evans	Book	18
The 48 Laws of Power	Robert Greene	Book	15
The Housemaid	Freida McFadden	Book	13
The Let Them Theory: A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About	Mel Robbins	Book	12
GED Test Prep 2025/2026	Tim Collins	Book	11
The Inmate	Freida McFadden	Book	11
Twice: A Novel	Mitch Albom	Book	11

THE AMERICAN PLACE

ESL

After High Schoolers

Throughout the winter and early spring, students in HPL's youth and adult programs participated in a series of enriching workshops and opportunities. In January, 26 English Learner Success and Next Steps for College students attended a Financial Literacy workshop led by Michael Crutchfield, covering essential banking skills and the risks of credit and high interest rates. In February, 22 students celebrated the Chinese New Year with Asian Performing Arts, learning about the Year of the Horse and creating lanterns and traditional dances.

In March, 28 students toured CT State Community College/Capital, meeting with ESL, Admissions, and Financial Aid staff, while later in the month, 33 high school seniors with strong attendance received laptops donated by Computers4People through a partnership with Capital Workforce Partners. The month concluded with an InsideARTside expressive arts workshop, where 15 students created "Flowers of Cultural Identity" following a guided meditation on heritage and cultural pride.

Adults

This quarter, the adult ESL program ran a total of 12 weekly classes, taking place on weekday mornings, weekday evenings, and Saturday mornings. A total of 206 individuals participated in ESL programming during the months of January-March. The Family Literacy program benefitted from a closer collaboration with the Children's Department fostering a tightly-knit cohort of engaged families as they practiced literacy-building activities with their children and improved their own English skills. In other English classes, students participated in field trips, such as to Capital Community College and to the Old State House. On both outings, besides gaining valuable information about their community, students were exposed to contextual vocabulary and had an opportunity to use real-world listening and comprehension skills in a low-stakes setting with teacher support. Saturday students benefitted from a collaboration with the Center for Latino Progress, who shared information about their services alongside information about the Connecticut Paid Leave program.



GED & HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY

The GED Learning Circle closed this quarter with its highest enrollment of the program year: 25 active learners in March, up from 20 in January. Monthly attendance reached 82, more than double the September baseline. These gains reflect the effectiveness of the program's rolling entry, which accommodates learners at different levels through a flexible blended learning model. As a GED Registrar, TAP now serves as a crucial GED Resource Center, providing learners with expert assessment, referral, and placement into appropriate preparation pathways. This ensures adults receive accurate guidance on readiness and are connected to the instructional option that aligns with their academic starting point and goals.

LITERACY ALLIANCE

Last fall, the American Library Association awarded TAP a grant to strengthen HPL's capacity to meet adult literacy needs. TAP invited fellow providers to form the Hartford Adult Literacy Alliance (HALA), a new network of six key agencies offering GED, ESL, ABE, citizenship preparation, and vocational training across the city. On March 19, representatives from Hartford Adult Education Center, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford, House of Bread Educational Center, CREC's Community Education Department, Urban League of Greater Hartford, and TAP gathered at the downtown library for HALA's first convening. During a facilitated discussion, members shared program overviews and best practices, demonstrating a strong collective commitment to strengthening adult literacy services in Hartford. Key information from each program was captured to guide continued collaboration moving forward.

CITIZENSHIP

In the first quarter of 2026, as immigration dominates national conversation, TAP ("The American Place") remains a trusted resource for the Greater Hartford community, supporting steady client demand, fielding media inquiries, and collaborating with local nonprofits. Despite the federal pause on immigration benefits for 39 countries and the need to charge for services, TAP's workload continues to grow, including a 20% increase in green card renewal and replacement applications as clients seek to ensure their documentation is secure. Citizenship assistance also continues, though new federal mandates have created fear and uncertainty, leading to fewer requests and significantly more work per case as counselors conduct deeper reviews, seek expert guidance, and file additional FOIA requests. These stricter evaluations have also increased post interview support as officers request more documentation before recommending approval. Even amid these challenges, TAP's impact is recognized: in March, The Connecticut Mirror <https://ctmirror.org/2026/03/29/ct-naturalization-ceremonies-delays-cancellations-trump/> highlighted TAP's work, and clients continue to express deep gratitude—one newly naturalized client returned the day after her oath ceremony to thank staff and immediately sought help with her son's application, a reminder of the trust TAP has earned in the community.

WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

COMPTIA A+ CERTIFICATE TRAINING

TAP's WIOA Youth CompTIA A+ cohort reached a significant milestone this quarter, with 10 of 20 participants passing Core 1 and now preparing for Core 2 to earn the CompTIA A+ certification. Seventeen of 20 participants are engaged in Paid Work Experience placements at \$18/hour across MHIS, COCC and HPL branches, DigitalLab and YouMedia — gaining real-world IT and digital navigation experience alongside their certification preparation. To ensure every participant exits with a market-recognized credential, the program is expanding its certification ladder beyond A+ to include CompTIA AI Essentials for all participants, and for advanced students Security+ or Cloud. NRF Foundation Customer Service certifications are being offered again this year — building a stackable pathway where every rung opens the next door.

SERVSAFE CERTIFICATE TRAINING

TAP's CDBG-funded ServSafe program served 31 participants in Q1 2026, issuing 96 cumulative certifications across Food Handler, Food Manager, Allergen, and Alcohol Server pathways — with a 100% Food Handler pass rate — bringing the program's total to 68 unique participants served across the fiscal year. Seven participants gained employment this quarter while 12 actively pursued food business development, including 3 who submitted applications to the Urban League's Microenterprise Microgrant Program for \$2,500–\$5,000 in startup capital. Career Coach outreach across Park Street, Franklin Avenue, and Albany Avenue generated 184 applications and identified a training need at Parkville Market, where an on-site ServSafe session was delivered.

BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER

This quarter marked the preparation phase for the June 1 opening of HPL's Business Resource Center, with opening week events finalized to include a Partner Fair, an Exploring Entrepreneurship workshop led by the Women's Business Development Center, and a Coffee & Conversation networking session. Partner coordination accelerated throughout the quarter: WBDC and CT SBDC confirmed monthly workshop programming; HEDCO and SCORE completed site tours and committed to opening week participation; and a new collaboration with the Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) was formalized, expanding pathways for Hartford's veteran entrepreneurs through Boots to Business, Reboot, and Growing Through Space programs. The quarter also included preparation of the BRC's self service digital resources, ensuring entrepreneurs can access online tools such as Patent and Trademark Resources, the Foundation Directory funding databases, and EBSCO's Small Business Source.

The BRC's hub and spoke model — with TAP serving as the front door to Hartford's small business ecosystem and programming delivered by expert partners — positions the center as essential civic infrastructure for Hartford's diverse community of entrepreneurs, including returning citizens, veterans, women business owners, and immigrant entrepreneurs.

FINANCIAL INCLUSIVITY

During Winter 2026, The American Place expanded its Financial Inclusivity work through new partnerships, first time programs, and increased community engagement.

UConn First Gen

- Delivered a four-week Financial Literacy Learning Circle (banking, saving, budgeting, credit, identity protection).
- 5 students opened IDAs with Liberty Bank.
- Co-hosted a Reality Fair for 40 students using the Credit for Life budgeting app with Liberty Bank counselors.



Housing Authority of Hartford (North Zone)

- Ran a second cohort of financial learning circles.
- Concluded with a 2026 vision collage goal-setting activity.

Capital Region Mental Health Center (CRMHC) Young Adult Services

- Hosted CRMHC young adults at HPL YOUmedia for financial learning circles.
- 1 participant opened an IDA with Liberty Bank.



CT Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)

- Delivered financial learning circles (Dec 2025).
- Launched a financial habits book club (Jan 2026) using The Power of Habit.
- 3 participants opened IDAs with Liberty Bank.

Open Hearth

- Provided financial learning circles and a financial habits book club.
- Held one session at HPL; participants obtained library cards.
- Several participants opened IDAs with Liberty Bank.

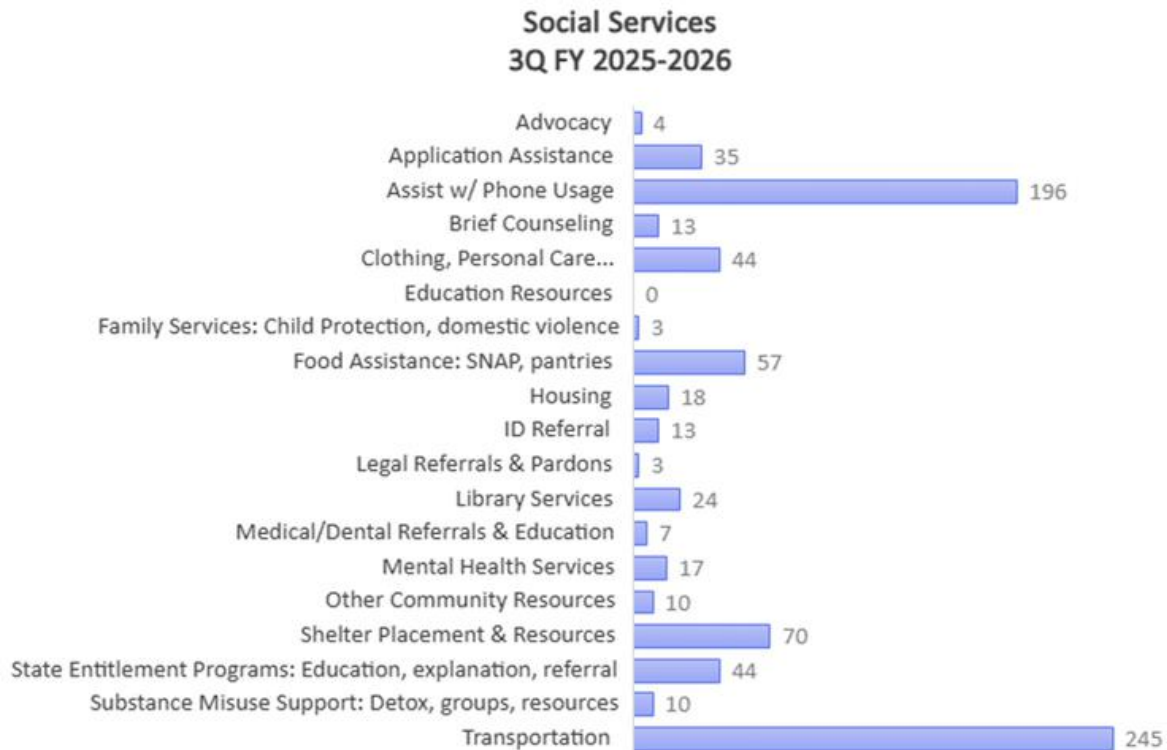
NEW INITIATIVE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE HARTFORD FILM COMPANY

In order to promote strong financial habits amongst Hartford residents, The American Place partnered with The Hartford Film Company to launch a Money Smart Video Competition. The goal of this project was to widely disseminate a series of short-form, made-for-social-media videos, which share financial education with the Hartford Community, and inform viewers about financial literacy workshops at HPL. The Hartford Film Company created three high quality example videos, which covered topics like savings accounts, predatory loans, and depositing checks. These videos were shared across social media and used to spread the word about the city-wide competition, in which Hartford residents were encouraged to create their own videos promoting Money Smart habits.

The competition received submissions from all across the city, both adults and students. Participants were encouraged to spread their financial knowledge through the Audience Favorite award, which rewarded videos which were widely viewed and liked. The competition received over 30,000 views on these videos sharing helpful financial tips, with a team of students from HPL's YOUmedia taking home the Audience Favorite prize, and a team of local residents taking home the Jury prize. The competition successfully shared smart money habits with thousands of Hartford residents, and well as the fact that HPL can be a valuable resource. The competition serves as a repeatable model for other libraries looking to share information in the age of social media.



SOCIAL SERVICES



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

HPL Studios in partnership with Hartford Performs hosted a “How to Teach Podcasting” workshop for teachers in the Hartford Schools system, aiming to bring content creation and performing arts skills to school curriculums. This quarter, 15 teachers participated and learned about how to create curriculums on podcasting.

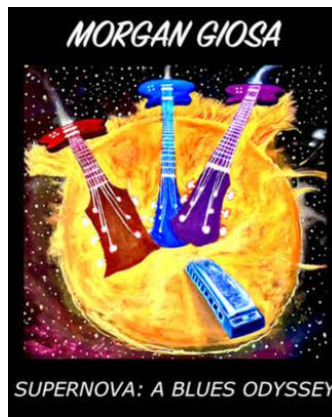
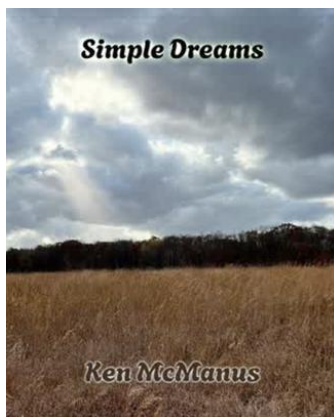
BABY GRAND JAZZ

HPL Studios supported the Baby Grand Jazz concert series livestream. HPL Studios workshop participants were given the opportunity to shadow and participate in the mixing of the concerts and livestreams. Three volunteers attended multiple concerts and gained hands-on experience with Dante/Allen & Heath sound ecosystems and attained their first in-industry mixing engineer credits.

THE BEAT

The Beat is growing! New albums from the 2025-2026 submissions round are set to release soon! Keep an eye out for the newly selected albums:

- Ken McManus – *Simple Dreams*
- Matt Parker – *Parker Plays X*
- Morgan Giosa – *Supernova: A Blues Odyssey*
- Fran Drew and the Lucky Strikes – *Trial by Fire*
- Matt Dwonszyk – *Matt Dwonszyk Live at the Side Door*
- Val Ramos – *Eres La Luna En Mi Cielo*



CULTURE & COMMUNICATIONS

HARTFORD HISTORY CENTER (HHC)

HIGHLIGHTS

The Hartford History Center (HHC) remained highly active throughout the winter months, balancing public service, deep research support, and major preparations for reopening its renovated space on June 1.

RESEARCH & PUBLIC ACCESS

Researchers continued to be welcomed at the Ropkins HHC Annex on Tuesdays. On March 10 alone, five researchers made use of the collections, reflecting steady demand even during the winter season.

On that day, researchers explored a wide range of topics, including:

- The history of the Hartford Home and Industrial School for the Blind
- The Hartford–Wethersfield trolley line
- Hartford’s 1920s playgrounds and recreation spaces
- 18th and 19th century history of the Hartford Fire Department
- Early documentation of Hartford’s African American population through the Town and City Clerk Archives

Beyond in-person visits, HHC responded to 106 reference inquiries during the quarter, serving local residents, scholars, students, journalists, and family historians. Topics ranged from genealogy to major moments in Hartford’s civic and cultural life, including:

- The City’s acquisition of private land to form Goodwin Park
- Charles Lindbergh’s welcome by Hartford residents
- The Palmer Raids and immigration enforcement in 1920s Hartford County
- The Hartford Blues football team
- Ongoing genealogical research



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

HHC played an active role in supporting community and institutional partners by providing research expertise and access to collections:

- The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) relied on Town and City Clerk records to document historic sewer layouts near High Street and the Park River.
- UConn Hartford consulted HHC for historical research and imagery for a public mural in the lobby of its new residential housing on Pratt Street. Materials drawn from multiple collections, including photographs, maps, voter registration cards, and historic advertisements, were coordinated with the Digital Library Lab for digitization.
- Several collection items were loaned to the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History for the exhibitions North End Stories and Rebellious, extending the reach of Hartford’s history statewide.

CULTURE & COMMUNICATIONS continued

COLLECTION GROWTH & PRESERVATION

The quarter also brought several significant additions to the Library's holdings, including:

- Six bound volumes of the Hartford Times (1910–1927)
- Classroom photographs from Cone Street School (1901)



- Hartford Times photographs rediscovered by the Connecticut State Library, including images of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's address in Bushnell Park (1936) and the Municipal Stadium dedication (1935)



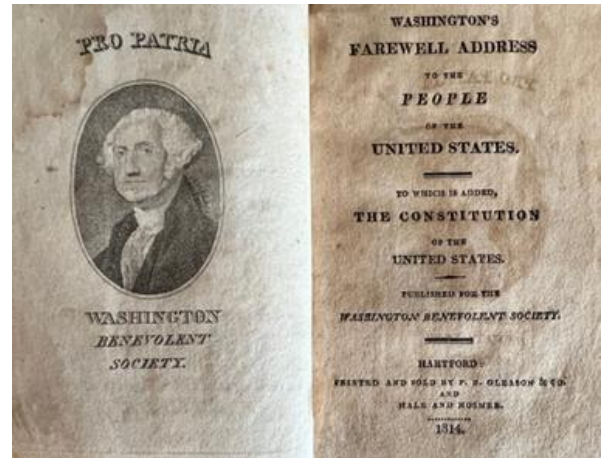
These materials deepen the documentary record of Hartford's civic, educational, and political history

PREPARING FOR REOPENING & AMERICA

250

By late March, focus shifted to preparing for the June 1 reopening of the newly renovated Hartford History Center. Staff advanced planning for multiple physical exhibitions and five digital screen exhibitions, all aligned with the themes of America's 250th anniversary and the lived experiences of Hartford's people.

One featured item illustrates this approach: a printing of President George Washington's Farewell Address, published in Hartford in 1814, a powerful reminder of the city's long role in the nation's civic and political life.



PRESERVING HARTFORD'S HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

HHC Collections in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA)

On view to the public—24/7

Over the past quarter, the Hartford History Center made significant progress expanding public access to its collections through the **Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA)**. This work ensures that Hartford's history, its people, institutions, and cultural life is preserved to national archival standards and available to researchers, educators, and the general public around the clock.

Preserving Cultural Memory: Real Art Ways Oral Histories

The Library created and launched a new **Real Art Ways Oral Histories Collection** within the CTDA, preserving the voices and stories of one of Hartford's most influential contemporary arts organizations. Fourteen oral history interviews, transferred to the Hartford History Center from the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History, were fully processed and made accessible online.

As part of this work, staff created detailed archival descriptions, converted interview transcripts into preservation compliant formats, and linked all transcripts and audio recordings to ensure long term stability, usability, and discoverability. These oral histories now form a permanent, publicly accessible record of Hartford's creative and cultural life.

Expanding Access to the Hartford Times Collection

The Hartford History Center also completed a major phase of work on the **Hartford Times Collection**, one of the Library's most heavily used visual archives. More than 1,100 digitized photo groupings, representing over 2,200 historic images, were added to the CTDA, allowing users to search, view, and study Hartford's 20th century history online.

This effort included extensive quality control and repair work following a system migration, ensuring that images, captions, and contextual information display correctly for public users. Staff also linked related photographs, such as front and back images, so that viewers can fully understand each object in its historical context.

CTDA stats for the HHC collections:

Monthly CTDA view counts for HHC digital collections were:

- **January:** 1,838
- **February:** 2,393
- **March:** 2,608

These numbers reflect how often users access HHC materials on the statewide Connecticut Digital Archive platform.

DIGITAL LIBRARY LAB @ HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY (DLL@HPL)

HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter, the Digital Library Lab @ Hartford Public Library (DLL@HPL) was excited to affirm its social enterprise mission commitment as it welcomed the placement of two part-time interns. These internship placements included Izzy Ibarra (Trinity College's Kelter Internship Program) and Elijah Earl (HPL's CompTIA A+ program), who directly supported DLL@HPL projects with Hartford's Department of Development Services, Riverfront Recapture, and the Farmington Libraries. These placements provide interns with valuable professional experience and mentorship, including hands-on exposure to digitization workflows, equipment operation, materials handling, archival digitization practices, as well as marketing, outreach, and social media content creation initiatives.

Following the completion of two consecutive three year terms by the Executive Director of Culture and Communications, Leon Ha was appointed as the next Hartford Public Library representative to the New England Document Conservation Center's (NEDCC) Advisory Committee. His appointment reflects a thoughtful transition that balances institutional knowledge with new leadership.

The appointment underscores the DLL@HPL's sustained commitment to expertise in digitization, preservation, and access, while strengthening its connection to a broader network of regional and national preservation and archival leaders. Participation on the NEDCC Advisory Committee positions the Digital Library Lab to contribute practical experience to sector wide conversations, remain engaged with evolving best practices, and reinforce its credibility as a trusted partner in the cultural heritage field.

Notably, this quarter the DLL@HPL collaborated with the University of Connecticut, in partnership with the Hartford History Center, to digitize historic materials related to UConn's recently acquired Pratt Street property. The digitized materials will be used in an installation within the building to help interpret the site's history and its connection to Pratt Street's historic community. The project was featured in a March 31 press release published on the MetroHartford Alliance website.



COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

HIGHLIGHTS

HPL's 2024-2025 Annual Report was selected as a winning entry for the American Library Association PR Xchange Award. The annual PR Xchange Awards Competition recognizes the very best public relations materials produced by libraries in the past year. Entries are evaluated on content, originality, and design by a team of experts in public relations, graphic design, communications, and marketing.

IN Q3, THE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING TEAM:

- The Communications and Marketing team worked in close partnership with the Digital Library Lab on a three-month focused marketing and outreach initiative. Including monthly press releases and weekly hour-long meetings.
- Collaborated with the Development team on marketing material for the author talk featuring former HPL board member Suzanne Hopgood.
- Worked with the Programming department to market Baby Grand Jazz, including press releases, digital screens, ads, weekly social media posts, and weekly newsletters.
- Continued working through Website Redesign with selected vendor, Juicebox.
- Worked closely with HR to design and implement a hiring marketing strategy for larger roles within the Library.
- Collaborated with the new safe operator, The Kitchen at Futures Inc., at the Downtown Library for announcements around their opening.
- Partnered with TAP and community partners for a press event around free computer giveaways for students enrolled in certain TAP programming.
- Continued working on signage for all the new spaces in the Downtown Library, including donor recognition.
- Drafted opening materials for June 1, including a save the date, official invite, and HPL store items.
- Continued social media strategy for this fiscal year. This quarter, created 14 reels to promote programming and events. Continue to build LinkedIn presence by sharing key awards and news and engaging with our community.



CULTURE & COMMUNICATIONS continued

PHOTOGRAPHY

10 events throughout the system

January

- Author Talk with Stowe
- Vision Boards
- MLK Letters of Hope

February

- Author Talk: Suzanne Hopgood
- Lift Every Voice & Drum
- Warm Winter Hands
- Window Painting

March

- Big Read
- Free Laptops Press Conference
- Hartford Performs

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Highlighted across HPL's communication channels in the third quarter (in addition to miscellaneous smaller programs - arts, crafts, etc):

- Baby Grand Jazz
- Serv-Safe classes
- GED classes
- Author Talk with Stowe
- The Beat
- Caroline Hewin's Scholarship recipient
- Smart Money with The Hartford Film Company
- Author Talk: Suzanne Hopgood
- World Affairs Council of Connecticut conversation
- The New York Times
- The Greater Hartford Regional School Choice Office
- Run with Eight Six Go
- Black History Month with Hartford History Center
- Audiobooks
- Movie screening with Mercado
- Free Laptops
- Second floor and teen services new space
- English classes
- Downtown Reopening
- Big Read

339

Facebook &
Instagram stories

73

Facebook posts

65

Instagram posts

13

Reels

Hartford Public Library, Kaman
Foundation Launch 22nd Season of Baby
Grand Jazz



CULTURE & COMMUNICATIONS continued

SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

Instagram: 5,565 followers, 261 new followers, 2.4k interactions (17.4 % increase)

Facebook: 12,160 followers, 336 new followers, 4.3k interactions (28.3% increase)

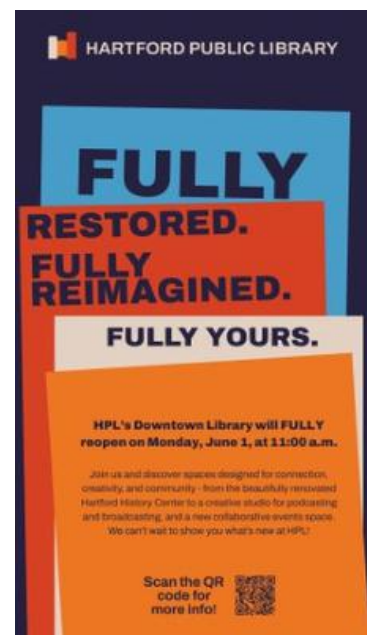
Bluesky: 120 followers

LinkedIn: 1,006 followers, 65 new followers

ENEWS

- Contacts: 26.5K
- Open rate: 28%
- Top clicks:
 - Registration link for DIY Collage 283 clicks
 - Registration link for Vision Boards 283 clicks
 - HPL App Google Play link 283 clicks
 - Stargazing event link 250 clicks
 - Strategic plan community conversations session 1 link 211 clicks

Most successful week: January 21, 2026: 31.4% open rate, 1.8 click rate, 1326 clicks throughout





ABOUT US | MEMBERSHIP | EVENTS | RESOURCES | SHOP HARTFORD | NEWS

Hartford Public Library Welcomes the Kitchen at Futures Inc. to the Downtown Library Cafe Space

[HARTFORD, CT] —Hartford Public Library (HPL) has selected The Kitchen at Futures Inc. as its new café partner at the Downtown Library, 500 Main Street. The café had a soft opening on Thursday, March 5. The approximately 1,904-square-foot café and event space marks the third café location in the region for The Kitchen at Futures Inc., which provides on-the-job skills training and paid employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

"We are thrilled to welcome The Kitchen at Futures Inc. as the newest addition to our Downtown Library. Throughout a competitive RFP process, The Kitchen at Futures Inc. stood out as the partner that best aligned with our vision for exceptional service, community engagement, and innovative use of our café space," said Bridget E. Quinn, HPL President and CEO. "We look forward to transforming this space into more than just a café. Together, we're building a dynamic workforce pipeline that will support our job training programs and give learners meaningful, real-world experience."

Hartford Courant

Arts | Baby Grand Jazz series returns to Hartford...

BREAKING NEWS Dog rescued from fire that extended to two Hartford homes, displacing 19 people May 21, 2024 at 10:20 am

THINGS TO DO > ARTS

Baby Grand Jazz series returns to Hartford Public Library with outstanding regional talent



Jobseekers > Youth Programs > Emp

HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY PARTNERS TO PROVIDE FREE LAPTOPS TO STUDENTS

Mar 19, 2026 | 2026, HOVC, Press, Technology, Youth



HPL STORE COMING SOON!

Hartford is for

BOOK LOVERS

I'd rather be at

the Library

I WENT TO THE LIBRARY & ALL I GOT WAS...

books, movies, music, magazines, newspapers, ebooks, audiobooks, research help, homework help, storytimes, reading programs, teen spaces, kids programs, community events, author talks, cultural programs, workshops, lectures, museum passes, databases, study spaces, meeting rooms, quiet space, computers, Wi-Fi, printing, scanning, copying, tech help, computer classes, digital skills, online learning, Hartford history, digitization, language learning, ESL classes, citizenship prep, immigration help, voter info, resume help, career coaching, workforce training, job center services, community resources, civic info, lifelong learning, and *a stronger community.*

HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY



HUMAN RESOURCES

RECRUITMENT AND STAFFING

Total Vacancies: 6

Internal appointment: 1

External Hires: 3

Public Services	The American Place	Administrative Services	IT, Facilities & Finance	Develop.	Culture & Communications	Administration
Library Assistant - Floater	College & Career Attainment and Retention Specialist	- Security Guard - HPL Studios Manager			Hartford History Center Archivist	Chief Advancement Officer

For the same period in FY25, Q3, twelve vacancies were filled.

NOTABLE STAFFING ACTIVITY

In Q3, FY26, the Regional School Choice Program expanded the Hartford Public Library's program staff contract hours from part-time to full-time. HPL branches serve as a direct service point for families who wish to learn more about CT's School Choice Program and enroll their school-aged children. The Library conducts engagement events, provides application support, and is recognized as an RSCO regional partner. Convenient branch locations create important access to school choice services.

The American Place CompTIAA program recruited and in partnership with the Human Resources team, onboarded 10 interns during the 3rd quarter of FY26. This is a significant increase in onboarding activity and signals the success of an important Workforce Development strategy happening in the Library. Special thanks to Julie Redding, Marc Feldman, and former employee Bryanna Moore for their investment in the critical work of introducing students to the CT technology industry.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In Q3, FY26, included the continuation of the Library's Language Acquisition programming. The quarter included intermediate Spanish and Introduction to Portuguese.

Annual Sexual Harassment Training—As part of HPL's commitment to a safe work culture, the Library provides annual, mandatory sexual harassment training for supervisors and managers. The two-hour training, held in January 2026, was delivered through a partnership with the law firm JacksonLewis. HPL is pleased to provide ongoing support in this critical area of policy education.

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

HPL Annual Winter Season Staff Social! Kicking off Q3 FY26, HPL staff celebrated the winter season with a staff social including fun, food, and a bit of competitive spirit in the form of library-themed Olympic games! Participation is voluntary; staff turnout was strong.

HUMAN RESOURCES

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS CONT.

Following a successful branch staff social in the Q2, the Albany Library hosted a second staff social during the FY26, Q3. This after-hours event invited all staff for an evening of games and connection. Both events were staff-initiated and supported by Library management and security teams!

The HPL Staff Book Club started in January 2025 and is still going strong! What have we been up to?

- The Tale of Edgar Sawtelle, David Wroblewski
- The Book of Doors, Gareth Brown
- James, Percival Everett
- Red Rising, Pierce Brown
- The Mountain in the Sea, Ray Nayler

Quarterly gatherings are held to foster staff interests in lifelong learning, fun, and connections with co-workers.



CAPITAL PROJECTS

DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

Significant progress was achieved on the Downtown project across the first, second, and third floors of the Library.

On the first floor, work continued with the installation of drywall, electrical systems, HVAC infrastructure, and flooring as part of the ongoing build-out of the HPL Studios, the new American Place areas, and UConn Co:Lab.

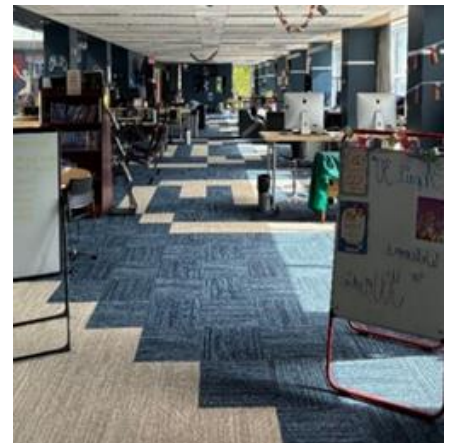
On the second floor, the Library reopened to the public following completion of several major improvements, including construction of new study rooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology, renovation of the YOUmedia space with new flooring installation, completion of the new security operations office, and development of enhanced public service areas featuring a new service desk and reading spaces.



Second Floor



Second Floor



Second Floor: YOUmedia

On the third floor, substantial progress was completed within the Hartford History Center, including installation of drywall, painting, electrical systems, and flooring.

BARBOUR LIBRARY

The property adjacent to the new Barbour Library presented a nonconforming condition that created a conflict with state building code requirements related to snow drift mitigation. While the new library design was fully compliant, the neighboring structure was located directly on the property line, preventing the required 20-foot separation between buildings.

Multiple alternatives were identified and actively pursued simultaneously in an effort to resolve the building separation and snow drift compliance issue in order to move the project forward. The team subsequently proposed shifting the building's required footage to eliminate the setback issue and pursued a zoning variance strategy, and in March successfully obtained approval to shift the library structure sufficiently to achieve the required setback. This action resolved the code compliance issue, and the project is now proceeding according to plan.

STATISTICS

PROGRAMS Third Quarter January - March 2026

	FY 2024-2025		FY 2025-2026	
Downtown	Programs	Attendance	Programs	Attendance
The American Place	339	3,637	284	3,000
Development	0	0	1	25
Programming	69	3,212	55	2,664
Public Services	15	188	14	115
Security	0	0	3	32
YOUmedia	35	697	115	520
Youth Department	100	2,400	101	1,882
Totals	558	10,134	573	8,238

Branches	Programs	Attendance	Programs	Attendance
Albany Adult	14	218	13	151
Albany Youth/Teens	125	1,138	214	1,553
Barbour Adult	12	89	11	94
Barbour Youth	16	133	33	221
Camp Field Adult	7	76	6	30
Camp Field Youth	28	222	32	263
Dwight Adult	18	110	9	58
Dwight Youth	55	1,043	72	845
Park Adult	24	321	16	307
Park Youth	25	238	43	533
Ropkins Adult	14	41	12	101
Ropkins Youth	91	1,462	99	1,041
Totals	429	5,091	560	5,197

Boundless Pilot Programs	Programs	Attendance	Programs	Attendance
Rawson - Pilot Program	101	1,602	89	1,142
West Middle - Pilot Program	124	2,421	148	2,448
Totals	225	4,023	237	3,590

HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY Third Quarter Programming Totals

	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026
Total Programs	1,212	1,370
Total Attendance	19,248	17,025