

TOPEKA &
SHAWNEE
COUNTY
**PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

**2025
ANNUAL
REPORT**

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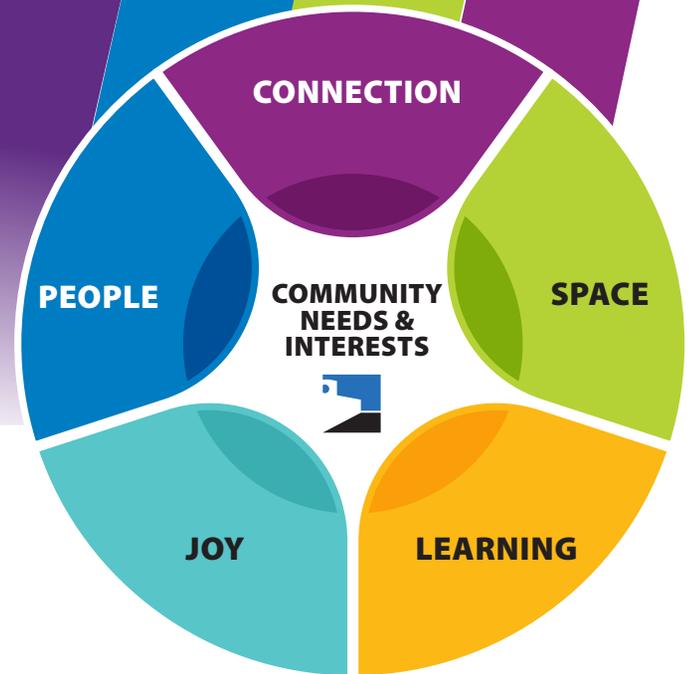
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Leadership



Library Officers

- BACK ROW: **Jesse Maddox**, Chief Human Resources Officer
Marie Pyko, Chief Executive Officer
- FRONT ROW: **Kim Strube**, Chief Financial Officer
Thad Hartman, Chief of Staff

ON THE COVER: Family watching creatures in the salt-water aquarium in the remodeled Kids Library.

A Year of Connections, Discovery & Joy

As I reflect on 2025 I am reminded why our library is the heartbeat of Topeka and Shawnee County. This year was defined by moments of quiet impact and vibrant celebration: a child discovering a lifelong favorite story in our Kids Library, a teen finding a sense of belonging in a creative space, and neighbors connecting over a shared love of music on a Sunday afternoon.

2025 was also a year of bold momentum. Guided by our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan we continued to build a library shaped directly by your voices. Your feedback led us to expand programs, strengthen local partnerships and transform our spaces – both physical and digital – into more welcoming and inspiring hubs for everyone.

Key Milestones & Innovations

The Kids Library Reimagined

We welcomed more than 600 families to the grand reopening of our Kids Library on May 29. This dynamic, interactive wonderland has since become a destination for play and discovery.

Beyond Our Walls

We brought the library to you by reworking the Book Nook at Westridge Mall and hosting regular community storytimes filled with music and play.

A New Standard for Home Delivery

We transitioned to weekly home delivery, ensuring people who don't have time to visit the library or bookmobile never need to wait for their next great read.

Summer Reading Reached New Heights

From helicopters and foam parties to magicians and geodes, we turned reading into an adventure. Community members read almost 9,000 books this summer. Our summer exhibit *Dr. Drab's Lab* drew 20,000 visitors who helped the misguided scientist rediscover the importance of color in our world.

Award-Winning Excellence

The Alice C. Sabatini Gallery and our Marketing team received prestigious honors from the Kansas Museums Association and Topeka Advertising Federation, recognizing our commitment to world-class creativity.

Literary Inspiration

We hosted New York Times bestselling authors William Kent Krueger (April) and Lisa Wingate (October), sparking deep conversations and community-wide inspiration.

Our Heart is Our People

I am incredibly proud of our staff. Their compassion ensures every person who walks through our doors or visits us online feels supported and valued. Whether we are greeting the 2,000 visitors who enter our building daily or meeting you via our bookmobiles, Learn & Play Bus, in our digital library or at one of 50 retirement communities, our goal remains the same: to foster a space where everyone belongs.

Thank you for being part of our story in 2025. We look forward to learning, playing and growing with you in the year ahead.

Warmly,

Marie Pyko



Irma & Judy demonstrating a science experiment for School-Age Fun.

Connection

Beyond the Building

We increased services at locations outside of the library building by:

- Providing regular librarian-led storytimes at Westridge Mall, Fairlawn Plaza and community centers
- Starting weekly TSCPL@Home deliveries of library materials in March (previously these were every other week)

Improved existing library work beyond the library by:

- Adding new topics to the Classroom Connections interactive presentations at elementary schools

Increased library visibility in the community by:

- Adding colorful vinyl wraps to Book Drop boxes & library delivery vehicles



Storytime with Sherry at the Book Nook, Westridge Mall



Horn family enjoying storytime delivered to their door



Laurel, outreach storyteller



Jacee promoting the library at a school.





End of summer party

Sensory inclusive bags

The library is now certified Sensory Inclusive through KultureCity to provide an accommodating and positive experience for anyone with sensory issues who visits the library. You can check out a sensory bag from the customer service desk, Kids Library desk or in the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery to make you or someone with you more comfortable at the library. The bags contain fidget tools, noise-canceling headphones, dark glasses and other resources.



Kits to help you tell your family story

Local & family story kits

In October we introduced Oral History Kits for check out. There are six different Oral History Kits: two complete with video cameras, two audio-only and two that work with a smartphone. You can bring history to life by capturing the amazing stories, personal experiences and unique perspectives of the people who lived through it!



Space



Improved Kids Library

At the end of May the library opened the redesigned Kids Library, a 14,050-square-foot interactive wonderland for kids to learn, play and grow. Whether kids are projecting their artwork on a giant screen, pretending to be veterinarians or fix-it pros in the ever-changing play zones, or diving into stories in cozy nooks near a towering T. Rex, every corner is made for discovery. Watch sea life shimmer in our saltwater aquarium, take a break in our calm room or play in an infant space. Kids can use a rock-climbing wall, take the stairs to the crow's nest for a bird's-eye view of the terrain, or relax in a campfire-inspired reading zone. There is also a vibrant tech-filled hangout for teens and a separate tech area for elementary-aged kids.

The Kids Library redesign is part of the library's Facilities Master Plan. HTK Architects designed the new space and Shirley Construction brought it to life. The project was funded by the library and gifts to the Library Foundation from the following organizations and individuals:

- Capitol Federal Foundation
- Security Benefit
- Lewis H. Humphreys Charitable Trust
- Advisors Excel
- Capitol Federal Employee Giving
- In Memory of Patricia Barr
- Snethen Family
- Everygy
- Giving Tuesday 2024 Gifts
- Library Giving Day 2024 Gifts
- Russ and Jane Greene



Enhancements in material handling

We had two major changes to the equipment that handles library materials. The first was a new Automated Material Handling (AMH) system, which moves materials from the outdoor and indoor book returns to the carts staff use to put materials back on the shelves. The new AMH can handle more than 1,000 items per hour and streamlines the sorting process of materials. It runs all the time allowing people to return items even when the library is closed.

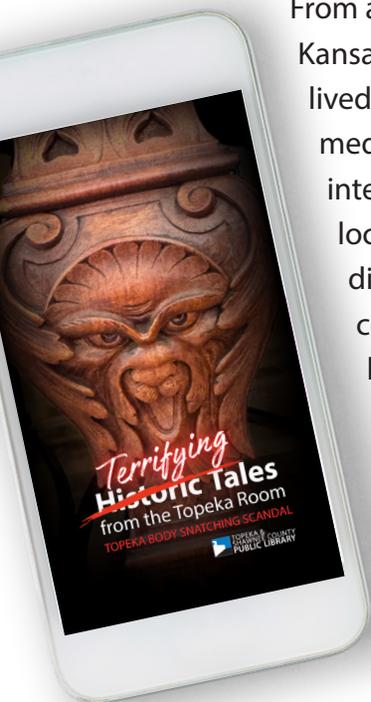
The second change is new checkout kiosks that are easier for people to use because the transaction options are clearly identified on the home screen and the material space is larger. You can now check out large items like cake pans and art kits at the kiosk instead of needing to take them to the customer service desk.

Learning

Local History

Our most popular web articles are about Topeka and Shawnee County history.

From a boy who fell off the Kansas capitol dome and lived to a grave robbing by medical students we have interesting true tales. Our local history librarian loves digging up facts and community members love learning about our past. In addition to the articles the local history team regularly presents at well-attended library events.

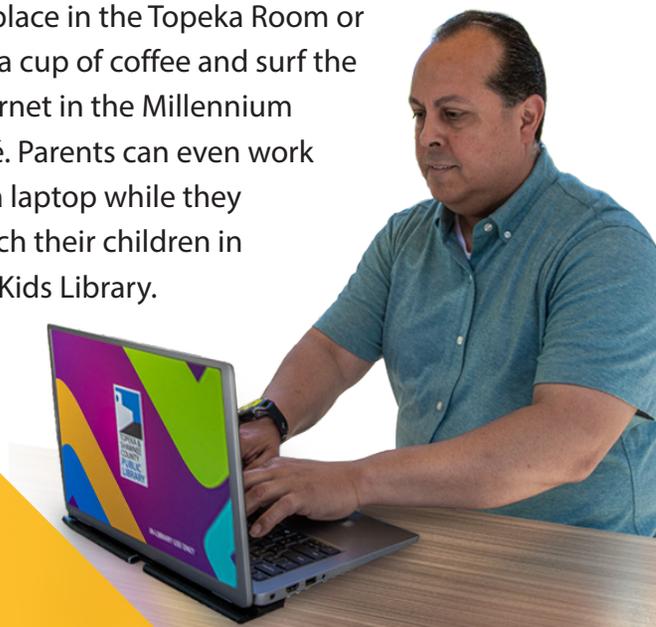


New York Times Access

In February the library started offering free online access to the New York Times. In addition to the main publication, cardholders can access special sections including The Athletic, NYT Cooking and NYT Games. This has been very popular. Our video on social media about the NYT Games had more than 14,000 views.

Laptop Check Outs

Adults can now check out laptops for in-library use. Our two kiosks hold 24 full-featured laptops that give you more flexibility of where you use computers to fully take advantage of all the great spaces within the library. If you are interested in quiet focused work, you can take a laptop into the North Reading Room, which is the only no-talking area of the library. You can relax by the fireplace in the Topeka Room or get a cup of coffee and surf the internet in the Millennium Café. Parents can even work on a laptop while they watch their children in the Kids Library.



Art Exhibits

Kids loved learning about colors and art in the Summer Art Exhibit for Children Dr. Drab's Lab. Our social media specialist played Dr. Drab in online videos and guest appearances at the exhibit and other summer events. Kids were eager to share with her what they had learned to convince the wacky scientist to give back the colors she had stolen. The exhibit had almost 20,000 visitors.

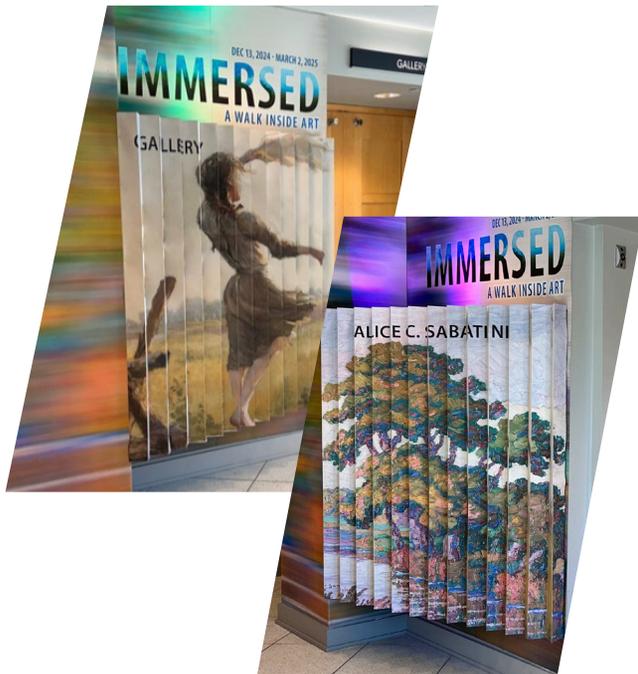
MAY 31 – AUG 24

Dr. Drab's Lab A Color Caper



DEC 13, 2024 – MARCH 2, 2025

Immersed A Walk Inside Art



MAR 14 – MAY 11

Topeka Competition 3D

Kara Donatelli, Lubbock, TX
Trying to Keep My Shit Together, 2022
 paper, plastic, wood
 Loan from the artist



2025 Total visitors

to the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery **38,513** UP 1%

SEPT 12 – NOV 30

Inked The Art of Tattooing



Joy



Author Lisa Wingate and moderator Betty Lou Pardue

Author Visits

Eleven authors of a variety of genres talked about their work and met readers at the library this year. It's fascinating to hear about writers' creative process and inspirations.

Bestselling author **William Kent Krueger** spoke to an enthusiastic crowd on April 16. While he has written some very popular stand-alone novels, most of attendees' questions were about his long-running Cork O'Connor mystery series set in the north woods of Minnesota. Before the public event

Krueger met with Friends of the Library members at an exclusive reception.

Bestselling historical fiction author **Lisa Wingate** captivated a large audience on Oct 14. The focus of the moderated conversation with Wingate was her book *Before We Were Yours*. This novel spent two years on the New York Times bestseller list and won the 2017 Goodreads Choice Award for Historical Fiction. Wingate also met with Friends of the Library members at an exclusive reception before the public event.

Dr. Walt Menninger and **Todd Fertig** discussed Dr. Walt's life as presented in his memoir *Like What You Do* on April 30.

Authors **Tim Bascom** and **Laurie Dove** discussed their lives and fiction where various cultural representations intertwine to form complex identities on June 10.

On July 15 **Ernie Webb** discussed a Dover, Kansas, true crime story and the process of bringing the story to light through the writing of *Goodbye, Butterfly: Murder, faith and forgiveness in a small Kansas town*.

Romance author **Jaclyn Westlake** stopped in the library July 24 for a book signing of her novel *Lucky Break* that was inspired by GO Topeka's Choose Topeka program.

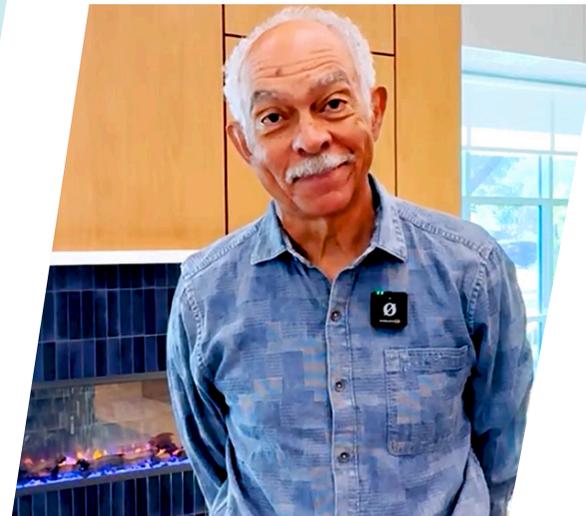
We had an overflow crowd for **Dr. Craig Yorke's** Aug 27 visit when he talked about his memoir *Steep: A Black Neurosurgeon's Journey*.

Kansas author and Topeka educator **A.D. Childers** talked about her work at the Friends Annual Event on Nov 2. Childers' debut novel, *The Switch Point*, was named one of the 2025 Kansas Notable Books.

On Nov 12 former Kansas Poet Laureate **Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg** read from her memoir, *The Magic Eye: A Story of Saving a Life and a Place in the Age of Anxiety* about surviving a rare cancer while saving family land.



Staffers Kaitlyn Kriley, Cadie Maas and author William Kent Krueger



Author Dr. Craig Yorke

Joy Reading Challenges

Winter

All ages
Read 3 books in January

1,311

ACTIVE READERS
DOWN 24%

7,410

BOOKS READ
DOWN 12%



Summer

All ages Adults read 6 books,
Kids read 8 hours

June & July

2,995

ACTIVE READERS
DOWN 9%

8,959

BOOKS READ
UP 1%

888,633

MINUTES READ
DOWN 12%



Fall

All ages
Read 3 books in October

1,090

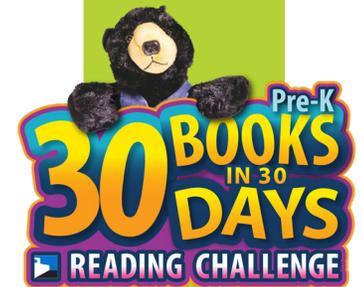
ACTIVE READERS
UP 32%

4,717

BOOKS READ
UP 12%



NEW
IN NOV 2025



164
ACTIVE
READERS

4,221
BOOKS READ

95
COMPLETIONS

TikTok Launch

Going strong on the traditional social media channels, it was time to spread library joy in a new way. We launched our TikTok at the end of May 2025 and gained 1,700 followers in our first six months. This move pushed us to create more video content than ever and the effort paid off. Interacting with us 35,000 times (through likes, comments, shares and saves), our new audience watched our videos 350,000 times!

With comments like “public libraries give me hope!” and

“...that’s amazing – I didn’t know I could do that at the library!” we knew we were hitting our target.

Facebook, Instagram and YouTube weren’t left out of this success with 350,000 YouTube views and 3.7 million views on Facebook and Instagram combined. Facebook customers watched our videos a total of 46.5 days!



Social Media



LAUNCHED IN MAY 2025
1,700 FOLLOWERS
350,000 VIEWS
35,000 CONTENT INTERACTIONS



23K FOLLOWERS
3.4M VIEWS
35K+ INTERACTIONS
1,116 HOURS WATCH TIME = 46.5 DAYS
816 POSTS

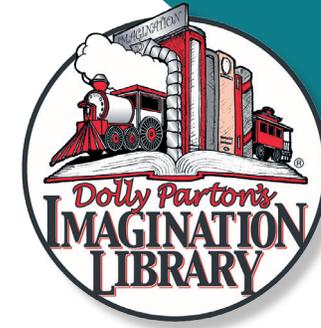


4.2K+ FOLLOWERS
321,749 VIEWS
10K INTERACTIONS
521 POSTS



349,687 VIEWS
1,796 ALL-TIME FOLLOWERS
171 NEW SUBSCRIBERS
2,835 WATCH TIME (HOURS)
1,443 LIKES
458 SHARES
317 VIDEOS ADDED

Statistics provided by Meta, Buffer and YouTube



Every Child Should Have Books in their Home

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library makes it easy and free for every child to have books in their home. Monthly kids birth till their 5th birthday are mailed a new, carefully selected book to keep.

Total books mailed in Year 8
 (April 2024–25)

69,173
 UP 5%

Actual number of children enrolled by December 2025

5,653
 DOWN SLIGHTLY

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is funded by Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, United Way of Kaw Valley and the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund.

People



Woman of Excellence

Technical Services Manager
Scarlett Fisher-Herremán

received a YWCA Northeast Kansas Woman of Excellence award. YWCA honors women leaders who rise above challenges, inspire greatness, and work to build a stronger, brighter future for us all. Fisher-Herremán shows a commitment to enriching the community through literacy, access and service, extending far beyond the traditional scope of library work or volunteerism.

Public Health Champion

Community Connections Librarian
Lissa Staley received the 2025 Public Health Champion Award for her outstanding contributions to our community by championing and leading equitable opportunities for health across Topeka and Shawnee County. She was recognized as the community member who helped to



spark change and impact the social and economic factors that influence health.



Award of Excellence

Genealogy Librarian
Sherri Camp received a 2025 Greater Topeka

Partnership Award of Excellence for her instrumental role in commemorating the 70th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. Camp is a fierce advocate for ensuring all stories and histories are represented, honored and celebrated in Topeka. She is a charter member of the planning and implementation for the annual Juneteenth celebrations. Camp works tirelessly to honor the legacy of Brown v. Board through annual celebrations.

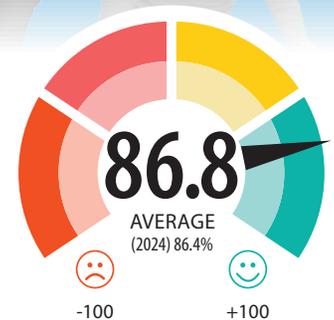


Emerging Library Leaders Class of 2025

Back row: Jacee Gleason, Jennifer Masters, Jacques Belderok, Allie Lockwood, Deanna Niles.
 Front row: Katie Keckeisen, Nessa Johnson

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

NPS can be generalized as measuring customer loyalty. Our high and positive NPS indicates people were satisfied with their recent experience at the library and are willing to tell others.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

FINANCIALS

Sources of Financial Support

Taxes	\$ 19,306,601
Fees & Reimbursements	\$ 382,825
Contributions	\$ 275,915
Grants & State Aid	\$ 62,817
Investment Income	\$ 771,885
Interfund Transfers	\$ 10,010
Total	\$ 20,810,053

Library Expenditures

Salaries and Benefits	\$ 13,467,373
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 3,237,276
Debt Service	\$ -
Library Materials	\$ 2,091,214
Equipment & Capital Improvements	\$ 1,461,041
Programming & Events	\$ 169,722
Interfund Transfers	\$ 10,010
Total	\$ 20,436,635

CARDHOLDERS

43% of all households in Shawnee County have an active library account



ASK A LIBRARIAN



We responded to **280,694** questions via walk-in, phone, email & chat UP 4.6%



COLLECTION

Our combined physical & digital collections give customers more than **2.6 million** items to choose from UP 13%

WIFI & COMPUTER USE



WiFi sessions
406,960

UP 6.9%

91,130 hours

UP 8%



Computer sessions
87,700

DOWN 1.3%

83,497 hours

DOWN 11.6%

DIGITAL LIBRARY



Catalog **681,866 total** visits DOWN 6.2%
283,422 unique visits DOWN 14.3%

Website **568,642 total** visits UP 4%
339,463 unique visits UP 2.9%

Unique visits measures the number of individuals who visit a site. Total visits measures the number of times a site has been visited. If an individual visits a site multiple times, this number is reflected in the total visits.

CIRCULATION

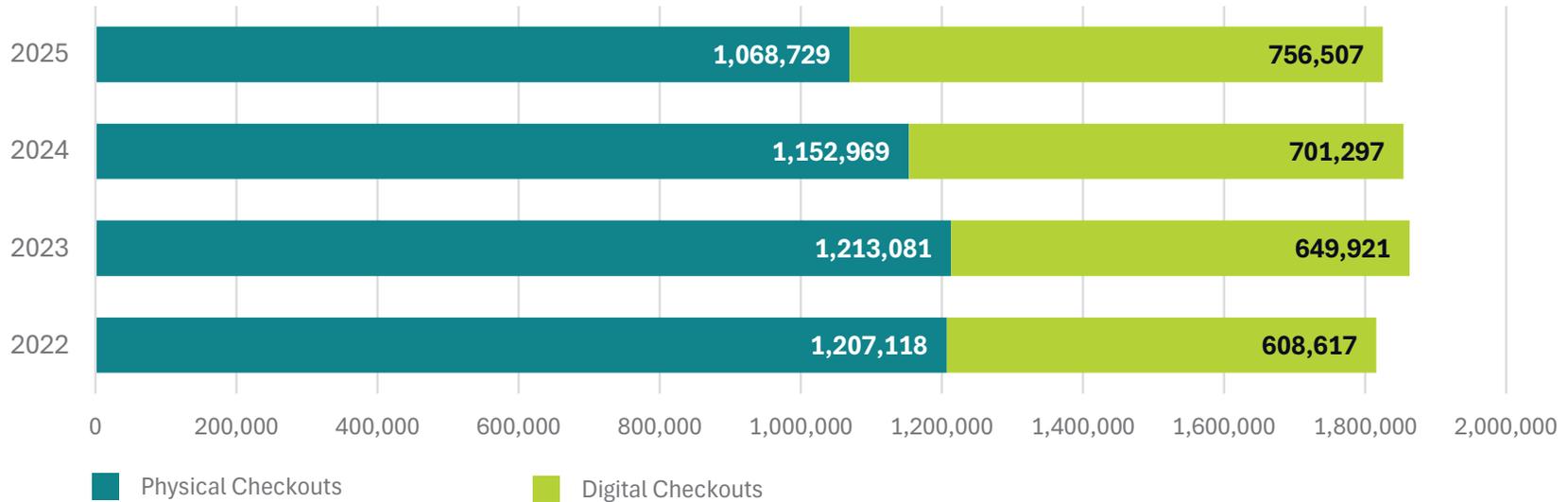


You checked out **1.8 million** items DOWN 1.6%

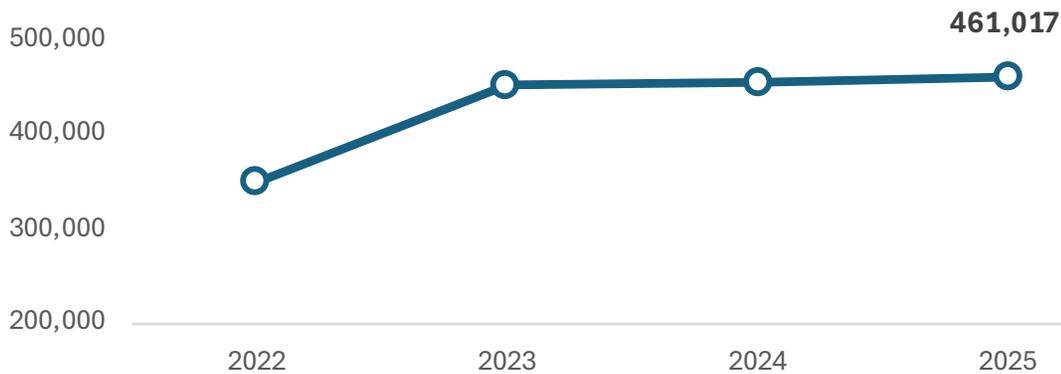
Digital Downloads **756,507** UP 7.9%

TSCPL@Home **44,194** checkouts UP 7.7%

Physical & Digital Circulations

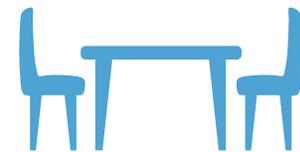


VISITS



MEETING ROOMS

25,563 meetings were held in all public meeting rooms UP 4.5%



RETIREMENTS

with much appreciation for their service and best wishes in retirement!



Rhonda Cathey
10 years

Theresa Girdler
10 years

**Tracie
McCluskey**
19 years

Kimberly Sain
23 years

Shari Schawo
30 years



1515 SW 10th Ave | Topeka, KS 66604
785-580-4400 | tscpl.org
Hours Mon-Fri 9am-9pm | Sat 9am-6pm | Sun Noon to 9pm

*Stay
curious*