



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

2026 Operating Budget - Submission

Date: October 27, 2025

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Toronto Public Library Board approval for the 2026 operating budget submission.

Toronto Public Library (TPL)'s 2026 operating base budget submission builds on existing library services and service levels and is aligned with TPL's key strategic priorities established in the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. The budget submission includes a base budget increase and identifies service enhancement requests that advance many of TPL's strategic objectives while supporting numerous City of Toronto key strategies, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy and SafeTO.

The total proposed TPL 2026 operating budget, including base changes and service enhancements, is \$280.790 million net (\$301.919 million gross), an increase of \$26.246 million net, or 10.3% over the 2025 approved budget.

The net budget increase of \$26.246 million over the approved 2025 operating budget, is comprised of:

1. annualization of prior year Council-approved initiatives totalling \$11.075 million, or 4.4%, which includes impacts driven by full year funding for all phases of the Open Hours Plan;
2. incremental staffing and benefit costs for the base complement of \$10.938 million, or 4.3%;
3. other base budget changes of \$3.667 million, or 1.4%; and
4. new and/or enhanced service requests that expand upon existing services and advance priorities outlined in the 2025 – 2029 Strategic Plan. This includes the expansion of the Financial Empowerment service and the Social and Crisis Support service, and new services aimed at reducing seniors' social isolation. A portion of these enhancements are funded by contributions generated through the Toronto Public Library Foundation, with the net impact totalling \$0.565 million net, or 0.2%.

The City of Toronto budget instructions emphasized meeting Council-approved service levels in 2026 and beyond in a financially sustainable manner, while seeking out opportunities to deliver improved services while reducing costs. The City provided operating targets for divisions, agencies, boards and commissions to achieve based on anticipated funding availability for the 2026 operating budget. TPL's target for the 2026 operating budget is a 7.8% increase over the approved 2025 operating budget. Based on the proposed 2026 operating budget, TPL would need to identify budget reductions totalling \$6.390 million or 2.5% to meet this target. Adjustments of this magnitude would result in service reductions, negatively impacting TPL services that matter most to Torontonians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. Approves the 2026 operating budget submission of \$280.790 million net (\$301.919 million gross), which represents a \$26.246 million net (\$28.618 million gross), or 10.3%, increase over the 2025 operating budget as detailed in Attachment 1, and is comprised of:
 - a. a base budget of \$280.225 million net (\$299.680 million gross), which represents an increase of \$25.681 million net (\$26.379 million gross), or 10.1%, and is comprised of:
 - i. annualization of prior year approvals of \$11.075 million net (\$10.262 million gross), or 4.4%;
 - ii. base budget changes for incremental staffing and benefit costs of \$10.938 million net and gross, or 4.3%; and
 - iii. other base budget changes of \$3.667 million net (\$5.178 million gross), or 1.4%.
 - b. service enhancement requests totalling \$0.565 million net (\$2.239 million gross), or 0.2%.
2. Authorizes staff to forward the 2026 operating budget submission to the City for consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2026 operating submission is summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: 2026 Operating Budget Submission & 2027-2028 Outlook (in \$millions)

	Staffing FTEs	2026			%	2027		2028	
		Gross	Revenues	Net		Net	%	Net	%
2025 Council-adjusted budget	1,950.8	273.301	18.757	254.544		280.790		300.290	
Annualization of prior year Council-approved initiatives	49.7	10.262	(0.813)	11.075	4.4%	1.808	0.6%	-	0%
Base Budget Changes			10.938		10.938	4.3%	10.551	3.8%	11.679
Salaries and benefits			4.238	-	4.238	1.7%	4.510	1.6%	4.786
Economic factors			25.0	2.786	1.511	0.5%	2.632	0.9%	7.547
Other base budget pressures				Efficiency measures	(1.846)	-0.7%	-	0.0%	-
									0%
2026 base budget increase	74.7	26.379	0.698	25.681	10.1%	19.500	6.9%	24.012	8.0%
2026 budget enhancements	7.5	2.239	1.674	0.565	0.2%	-	0.0%	0.248	0.1%
Total 2026 budget increase	82.2	28.618	2.372	26.246	10.3%	19.500	6.9%	24.260	8.1%
2026 operating budget submission & 2027-2028 outlook	2,033.0	301.919	21.129	280.790	10.3%	300.290	6.9%	324.550	8.1%

The City provided operating targets that divisions, agencies, boards and commissions are expected to meet. These targets are based on anticipated funding availability for the 2026 operating budget. TPL's initial target for the 2026 operating budget is a 7.8% increase over the approved 2025 operating budget. Based on the proposed 2026 operating budget, TPL would need to identify budget reductions totalling \$6.390 million or 2.5% to meet this target.

The proposed 2026 operating budget submission will be submitted to the City for consideration.

The Director, Finance & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2026 operating budget will support TPL's strategic plan objectives, including supporting social connection, civic engagement and democracy, shared community spaces, building on commitments to learning and growth, and ensuring awareness and availability of library services.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

TPL's 2026 Operating Budget strengthens equitable access to library services across the city by expanding open hours, enhancing service delivery, and ensuring that all Torontonians can benefit from welcoming, inclusive, and accessible library spaces. The budget is expected to have positive impacts for all equity-deserving groups while advancing the Library's and the City's key equity and inclusion strategies, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy; SafeTO; and Our Health, Our City. This budget prioritizes investments that advance equitable access and outcomes and prioritizes service expansion to branches serving equity-deserving communities and Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. This includes expanding access to financial empowerment and crisis support services as well as service to seniors, while deepening partnerships that reflect and respond to the diversity of Toronto's communities.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 29, 2025, the Library Board received for information the [2026 Operating Budget - Status Update](#), which provided the 2026 budget outlook that was included in the approved 2025 operating budget and highlighted potential changes to the 2026 outlook.

COMMENTS

TPL has a proven track record of fiscally responsible budgeting and financial stewardship of public funds. The proposed 2026 operating budget submission ensures existing services and service levels are maintained, while also expanding upon and enhancing services in alignment with the 2025 – 2029 Strategic Plan and many City of Toronto priorities. The budget builds on and advances many of these priorities by providing welcoming and accessible public spaces with expanded open hours across all library branches, while providing services across the community and supporting other poverty reduction initiatives.

2026 Priorities Actions

The 2026 operating budget submission supports a number of TPL priority actions, including:

- Increasing library open hours by fully funding the TPL Open Hours Plan so that all branches are open 7 days a week by the summer of 2026. This will help manage the increasing demand for library services and increase access to library spaces for all communities.
- Creating welcoming, safe, inclusive, accessible and sustainable spaces through both the operating and capital budgets, TPL's 2026 budgets will create spaces for all.
- Improve service access for seniors through community-based service expansion and creation of new services to reduce seniors' social isolation, meeting people at their point of need.
- Advancing equitable access and positive outcomes through expanding access to financial empowerment and crisis support services.
- Introducing new programs that strengthen social connections, increase civic engagement and expand access to information.
- Continue to enhance TPL's safety and security program, with new training, and staff and technology supports to ensure welcoming and safe environments for staff and customers.
- Advancing TPL's digital strategy to modernize, connect and secure TPL's data and technology environment, enabling digital inclusion and optimizing TPL's business operations.

Within each of these priority actions TPL has maintained, expanded or enhanced library services. TPL's proposed 2026 operating budget submission reinforces its mission to provide free and equitable access to services which meet the changing needs of Torontonians.

2026 Operating Budget Submission

TPL's proposed 2026 net operating budget submission is \$280.790 million, which represents a \$26.246 million, or 10.3%, increase over 2025 and is comprised of:

- annualization of prior year Council-approved initiatives of \$11.075 million net, or 4.4%;

- base budget changes for incremental staffing and benefit costs of \$10.938 million net, or 4.3%;
- other base budget changes of \$3.667 million net, or 1.4%; and
- new and/or enhanced service requests of \$0.565 million net, or 0.2%.

Annualization of prior year Council-approved initiatives

Net incremental funding of \$11.075 million, including 49.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions, ensures that budget enhancements approved in 2025 will be adequately funded and the goals and outcomes from these initiatives are achieved and are sustainable. These are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Annualization of prior year Council-approved initiatives (in \$ millions)

	2026				
	Staffing FTEs	Gross	Revenues	Net	%
Open Hours - Phase 2 annualization		3.851		3.851	1.5%
Open Hours - Sunday service expansion annualization		2.708		2.708	1.1%
Open Hours - Phase 3 annualization	16.0	0.877		0.877	0.3%
Open Hours - Monday service expansion annualization	33.7	2.284		2.284	0.9%
Annualization of prior year Youth Hubs expansion		0.444		0.444	0.2%
Annualization of prior year Digital Innovation Hubs expansion		0.098		0.098	0.0%
Financial Empowerment Service - approved in 2025			(0.248)	0.248	0.1%
Social & Crisis Support Service - approved in 2025			(0.565)	0.565	0.2%
Annualization of prior year Council-approved initiatives	49.7	10.262	(0.813)	11.075	4.4%

- Open Hours annualization: increased budget of \$9.720 million net and gross, including 49.7 FTEs, to account for the full year implementation for Open Hours Phase 2 and 3, and Sunday and Monday service expansions approved as part of the 2025 budget submission. Approval of this incremental funding will ensure all 100 branches will be open seven days a week starting in the Summer of 2026.
- Annualization of prior year Youth Hubs expansion: increased budget of \$0.444 million net and gross. Budget approved as part of the 2025 submission accounted for partial year implementation of adding 3 youth hubs. Approval of this incremental funding will ensure the new youth hubs are funded for the full year.
- Annualization of prior year Digital Innovation Hubs expansion: increased budget of \$0.098 million net and gross. Budget approved as part of the 2025

submission accounted for partial year implementation of adding a digital innovation hub. Approval of this incremental funding will ensure the digital innovation hub is funded for the full year.

- Financial Empowerment and Social and Crisis Support service expansions in 2025 were fully funded through donations and contributions generated from the Toronto Public Library Foundation. In 2026, these expansions will become part of the base service and included as part of the City of Toronto funding, consistent with past practice.

Base Budget Changes

Base budget changes result in an increase of \$14.606 million, or 5.7%, as summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Base Budget Changes (in \$millions)

	2026				
	Staffing FTEs	Gross	Revenues	Net	%
Salaries and Benefits					
Salaries and benefits - COLA, Merit, Step, base pressures		10.938		10.938	4.3%
Economic factor changes					
Contracted services		2.486		2.486	1.0%
Library materials increase		1.154		1.154	0.5%
Supplies and other services increase		0.543		0.543	0.2%
Utilities		0.055		0.055	0.0%
Economic Factor Changes	-	4.238	-	4.238	1.7%
Other base budget changes					
Line by line review - alignment to actual experience		0.793	(0.489)	1.282	0.5%
IT subscription fees for program related software services		0.339		0.339	0.1%
Contribution to asset replacement reserve		0.500		0.500	0.2%
Contribution to fleet reserve		0.138		0.138	0.1%
Project management recoveries from capital	3.0	(1.309)		(1.309)	-0.5%
Alignment to actuals for programs funded through the TPL Foundation	15.0	2.325	2.000	0.325	0.1%
Insourcing of contracted services	7.0	-	-	-	0.0%
Other Base Budget Changes	25.0	2.786	1.511	1.275	0.5%
Efficiency measures					
Realignment of budget to actuals analysis		(0.343)		(0.343)	-0.1%
Continuous improvement initiatives		(0.709)		(0.709)	-0.3%
Technology and system optimization		(0.794)		(0.794)	-0.3%
Efficiency measures	-	(1.846)	-	(1.846)	-0.7%
Base Budget Changes	25.0	16.117	1.511	14.606	5.7%

Salaries and benefits

Incremental 2026 costs related to salaries and benefits for base complement of staff from 2025 totals \$10.938 million net, or 4.3%. This is related to cost-of-living adjustments (COLA), merit and progression pay, as well as other prescribed costs and adjustments related to salaries and benefits required to

ensure sufficient budget is available to support the base staff complement in 2026.

Economic factors

Net increase of \$4.238 million, or 1.7%, is related to non-salary inflationary, contractual and/or economic increases comprised of:

- \$2.486 million net for budget increases for service contracts related to facilities, security and technology services, as well as other services provided by third parties to ensure the 2026 budget reflects current economic and contract conditions;
- \$1.154 million net increase for library materials to maintain the current supply for a diverse range and formats of library materials. The budget increase partially addresses inflationary pressures from rising prices and reduced purchasing power due to the CAD/USD currency exchange rate and anticipated currency risks, impacting digital content such as e-books, e-audio, e-magazines, movies, research databases and other collection contracts which are primarily sold in US dollars;
- \$0.543 million net increase to account for economic factors and consumer price index (CPI) increases related to supplies and services for branches, in addition to inflationary pressures for supplies for internal facilities-related work; and
- \$0.055 million net increase for utilities, which is lower than in previous years partially due to the elimination of the carbon tax.

Other base budget changes

Net increase of \$1.275 million, or 0.5%, including 25.0 FTEs, for other base budget changes related to:

- Net increase of \$1.282 million, or 0.5%, related to revenue adjustments for venue space rentals and leasing revenues and expenses to adjust to actual and expected experience, identified through line-by-line reviews;
- Net increase of \$0.339 million, or 0.1%, to account for operating funding needed for IT subscription fees for program related software services, as TPL continues to modernize its IT infrastructure and service offerings through its Digital Strategy;
- Net increase of \$0.500 million, or 0.2%, related to an increase to TPL's contribution to its asset replacement reserve to establish a funding source for future technology replacement. This will bring the annual contribution to

this reserve to \$0.9 million, with the goal to get to an annual reserve contribution of \$2.4 million annually;

- Net increase of \$0.138 million, or 0.1%, related to an increase to TPL's contribution to its fleet reserve reflecting the necessary contributions to ensure the TPL fleet replacement strategy is appropriately funded in the future;
- Net decrease of \$1.309 million, or 0.5%, to account for costs moved from the operating to the capital program for staff working on, and directly supporting TPL's capital program. This would apply the costs of these staff against the respective capital projects and programs;
- Net increase of \$0.325 million, or 0.1%, including 15.0 FTEs, to reflect the gross and revenue budget for active and reoccurring programs and resources funded through donations generated through the Toronto Public Library Foundation; and
- Adding 7.0 FTEs, with no net financial impact, for the transition of certain functions from external contracted services to internal resources. This is primarily related to the use of external contracted services to support project management functions within TPL's growing capital program. TPL has refined and enhanced its project management approach resulting in significant improvements in capital program management and delivery. TPL will now seek to internalize the expertise and knowledge of its project management approach to capital program delivery and transition to internal resources to carry out this work. TPL will realize savings within the capital program and ensure the specialized skill sets and knowledge are retained.

Efficiency Measures

As part of the City's pre-budget actions, all City divisions and agencies were asked to identify efficiency opportunities that do not impact services, are sustainable, and could be included in the 2026 budget submission. TPL identified the following:

- Net decrease of \$0.343 million, or 0.1%, budget savings identified through a review to ensure budgets are aligned to actual and expected experience;
- Net decrease of \$0.709 million, or 0.3%, related to budget savings identified through continuous improvement initiatives; and
- Net decrease of \$0.794 million, or 0.3%, related to budget savings identified through optimization of technology systems and processes.

2026 Budget Enhancements

TPL's 2026 budget enhancements total \$0.565 million net (\$2.239 million gross), or 0.2%, including 7.5 FTE staff positions to advance a number of TPL strategic objectives while supporting many of the City of Toronto's key strategies, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy, SafeTO and Our Health, Our City, as summarized in Table 4 below:

Table 4: New & Enhanced (in \$millions)

	2026				
	<i>Staffing FTEs</i>	Gross	Revenues	Net	%
Financial Empowerment Service expansion	0.5	0.248	0.248	-	0.0%
Social & Crisis Support Services expansion	1.0	0.565	-	0.565	0.2%
Reducing Seniors Social Isolation	6.0	1.426	1.426	-	0.0%
New & Enhanced	7.5	2.239	1.674	0.565	0.2%

TPL continues to benefit from the support of the Toronto Public Library Foundation. The TPL Foundation is a key contributor to the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, playing an important role in advancing and accelerating its outcomes. Fundraising and donor support allows TPL to innovate, develop new programs and scale impact to meet community needs faster.

Financial Empowerment Service expansion

TPL's Financial Empowerment Service (FES) is a City of Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy initiative developed in partnership with Prosper Canada, a national charity. The 2026 enhancement is requested to expand service to two additional library branches. This service provides one-on-one, in-person support from community agency expert partners, providing in-depth and personalized counselling to Torontonians on topics such as filing taxes, savings & debt levels, credit and budgeting, all within library branches. Customers will also have access to curated online resources and opportunities to engage with library staff and partner agencies for additional supports.

This Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy initiative for vulnerable populations targets Persons with low income often intersecting with other equity-deserving groups: persons with disabilities; individuals and families who are homeless or under-housed; Black and racialized individuals; Indigenous Peoples;

immigrants, refugees, and undocumented individuals; and vulnerable youths and seniors.

The expansion of this initiative is fully funded by donations through the Toronto Public Library Foundation in 2026 and 2027.

Social & Crisis Support Services expansion

The Social & Crisis Support Services enhancement, totalling \$0.565 million gross and net, including 1.0 FTE, will expand services that respond to customers in need of access to social, mental health or crisis supports. In partnership with Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) anchor partners, service will expand to library branches in Scarborough. TPL's current service level in partnership with TCCS anchor partner, Gerstein Crisis Centre, places Gerstein's Community Crisis Intervention Workers and wellness and recovery programming in 12 downtown TPL branches. Crisis Workers provide short-term counseling, mental health supports, referrals for health and housing supports, wellness checks and other crisis interventions as well as specialized group programming. This service is aligned with the Toronto Community Crisis Service and Toronto's Our Health Our City Strategy.

TPL's Social & Crisis Support Services initiative provides service to vulnerable populations including individuals from the following and often intersecting equity-deserving groups: persons with low income; persons with disabilities; individuals and families who are homeless or under-housed; racialized groups including Black and Indigenous Peoples; immigrants, refugees, and undocumented individuals; and vulnerable youth and seniors.

Reducing Seniors Social Isolation

The Reducing Seniors Social Isolation initiative expands library services in branches and community-based locations to help seniors remain independent, connected, and supported. Through new and increased programming in library branches and outreach to Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), including Toronto Community Housing sites, TPL will strengthen social connections and improve access to supports for seniors.

TPL Community Librarians will deliver services using outreach vans equipped for programs that promote healthy aging, social inclusion, digital literacy, and

aging in place. Working with medical and health link providers, TPL will implement a social prescribing model that connects seniors to non-clinical interventions and community supports.

This initiative supports the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto Seniors Strategy 2.0 and 3.0, and Our City, Our Health Strategy.

This initiative is made possible through the largest gift ever received by the Toronto Public Library Foundation, an investment of over \$7 million made by the Waltons Trust. This funding will establish a five-year initiative to support social connections for seniors. This program will be fully funded and delivered over a five-year period from 2025 to 2030.

[**2027-2028 Operating Budget Outlook**](#)

The 2027 and 2028 operating base budget outlook is detailed in Attachment 1 and shows net base budget increases of 6.9% and 8.1% in 2027 and 2028 respectively. This reflects estimated pressures related to annualization of prior year approved services, COLA, and economic factors that will be experienced in 2027 and 2028.

2026 Operating Budget Timetable

Activity	Schedule
Board Meeting – 2025 Operating and Capital budget submissions	October 27, 2025
Board Meeting - 2026 Budget Updates	December 1, 2025
Budget Launch - Budget Committee	January 8, 2026
Budget Committee Review Meetings	January 14 to 16, 2026
Budget Committee Wrap Up	January 23, 2026
Board Meeting - 2026 Budget Updates	January 2026
Mayor's Proposed Budget	January 29, 2026
Special Council meeting – 2026 Budget adoption	February 10, 2026
Board Meeting - Adoption of 2026 Budgets	February 2026

CONCLUSION

TPL's 2026 operating budget submission is a prudent funding request necessary to maintain existing service levels and manage service adjustments in response to changing market conditions, community needs and to align with TPL's Strategic Plan and Digital Strategy. The budget request allows for investments in additional TPL priorities areas, and digital and community-based services that support equity-deserving populations. It also responds to several key issues and challenges the Library and the City are facing and includes support from the TPL Foundation to seed innovation and accelerate strategic service priorities. Approval of the proposed 2026 operating budget will ensure TPL has the operating funding needed to deliver on its service expectations and support many of the Library's and City Council's strategic priorities.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Moe Hosseini-Ara
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2026 Operating Budget Submission and 2027-2028 Outlook

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY
2026 OPERATING BUDGET & 2027 - 2028 OUTLOOK

	Staffing FTEs	2026				Staffing FTEs	2027			Staffing FTEs	2028	
		GROSS	REVENUE	NET	%		NET	%	NET		%	
		\$Millions					\$Millions				\$Millions	
2025 Council Adjusted Budget		1,950.8	273.301	18.757	254.544		2,033.0	280.790		2,042.5	300.290	
Annualization of prior year Council-approved initiatives												
1 Open Hours - Phase 2 annualization			3.851	-	3.851	1.5%						
2 Open Hours - Sunday service expansion annualization			2.708	-	2.708	1.1%						
3 Open Hours - Phase 3 annualization	16.0		0.877	-	0.877	0.3%			0.578	0.2%		
4 Open Hours - Monday service expansion annualization	33.7		2.284	-	2.284	0.9%			1.230	0.4%		
5 Annualization of prior year Youth Hubs expansion			0.444		0.444	0.2%						
Annualization of prior year Digital Innovation Hubs expansion			0.098		0.098	0.0%						
7 Financial Empowerment Service - approved in 2025			(0.248)		0.248	0.1%						
8 Social & Crisis Support Service - approved in 2025			(0.565)		0.565	0.2%						
Salaries and Benefits	49.7	10.262	(0.813)	11.075	4.4%			1.808	0.6%			0.0%
9 Salaries and benefits - COLA, Merit, Step, base pressures		10.938	-	10.938	4.3%			10.551	3.8%			11.679 3.9%
Economic Factor Changes		10.938	-	10.938	4.3%			10.551	3.8%			11.679 3.9%
10 Contracted services		2.486		2.486	1.0%			2.704	1.0%			2.839 0.9%
11 Library materials increase		1.154		1.154	0.5%			1.212	0.4%			1.272 0.4%
12 Supplies and other services increase		0.543		0.543	0.2%			0.359	0.1%			0.375 0.1%
13 Utilities		0.055		0.055	0.0%			0.235	0.1%			0.300 0.1%
Other Base Budget Changes		4.238		4.238	1.7%			4.510	1.6%			4.786 1.6%
14 Line by line review - alignment to actual experience		0.793	(0.489)	1.282	0.5%			0.998	0.4%			
15 IT subscription fees for program related software services		0.339	-	0.339	0.1%			0.451	0.2%			
16 Contribution to asset replacement reserve		0.500		0.500	0.2%			0.500	0.2%			
17 Contribution to fleet reserve		0.138		0.138	0.1%			0.064	0.0%			0.033 0.0%
18 Operating impact of capital	-	-	-	-	0.0%		5.0	0.619	0.2%	68.5	7.514	4.0%
19 Project management recoveries from capital	3.0	(1.309)	-	(1.309)	-0.5%							
Alignment to actuals for programs funded through the TPL												
20 Foundation	15.0	2.325	2.000	0.325	0.1%							
21 Insourcing of contracted services	7.0	-	-	-	0.0%							
Efficiency Measures	25.0	2.786	1.511	1.275	0.5%			5.0	2.632	0.9%	68.5	7.547 2.5%
22 Realignment of budget to actuals analysis		(0.343)		(0.343)	-0.1%							
23 Continuous improvement initiatives		(0.709)		(0.709)	-0.3%							
24 Technology and system optimization		(0.794)		(0.794)	-0.3%							
	-	(1.846)	-	(1.846)	-0.7%							
Base Budget Increase	74.7	26.379	0.698	25.681	10.1%			5.0	19.500	6.9%	68.5	24.012 8.0%
2026 Operating Base Budget Submission & 2027-2028 Outlook	2,025.5	299.680	19.455	280.225	10.1%			2,038.0	300.290	6.9%	2,111.0	324.302 8.0%
New and Enhanced												
25 Financial Empowerment Service expansion	0.5	0.248	0.248	-	0.0%			0.5	-	0.0%		0.248 0.1%
26 Social & Crisis Support Services expansion	1.0	0.565		0.565	0.2%							
27 Reducing Seniors Social Isolation	6.0	1.426	1.426	-	0.0%			4.0	-	0.0%		- 0.0%
	7.5	2.239	1.674	0.565	0.2%			4.5	-	0.0%		0.248 0.1%
Total Budget Increase	82.2	28.618	2.372	26.246	10.3%			9.5	19.500	6.9%	68.5	24.260 8.1%
2026 Operating Budget Submission & 2027-2028 Outlook	2,033.0	301.919	21.129	280.790	10.3%			2,042.5	300.290	6.9%	2,111.0	324.550 8.1%

Toronto Public Library Board 2026 operating budget & 2026-2035 capital budget and plan submissions

Toronto Public Library Board Meeting

October 27, 2025

our strategic priorities

1 social connection,
civic engagement
and democracy

2 shared
community
spaces

3 learning and
growth

4 awareness and
availability

focus on
staff

aligning
with our
Digital
Strategy

working
together with
the TPL
Foundation



tpl strategic plan & city priorities

Our goal is to **address the city's systemic challenges** and empower Torontonians to **take advantage of opportunities**, helping both the city and its residents thrive.

tpl:

	social connection, civic engagement and democracy	shared community spaces	learning and growth	awareness and availability
City of Toronto Corporate Strategic Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Action Plan for Toronto's Culture Sector	✓	✓	✓	✓
Action Plan for Toronto's Economy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism		✓	✓	
ConnectTO: Internet Connectivity			✓	✓
Electric Vehicle Strategy		✓		
Gender Equity Strategy		✓		✓
Newcomer Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Our Health, Our City Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raising the Village	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconciliation Action Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resilience Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
SafeTO	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seniors Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
TO Prosperity: Poverty Reduction Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Toronto Civic Engagement Program	✓			
TransformTO Net Zero Strategy		✓		
Youth Equity Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓

tpl strategic plan and 2026 budget areas of focus

1 Increase the accessibility of our spaces and services, to support multiple City and TPL strategies and outcomes.

- Increase open hours
- SOGR, AODA and branch renovations
- Expand services to more neighbourhoods

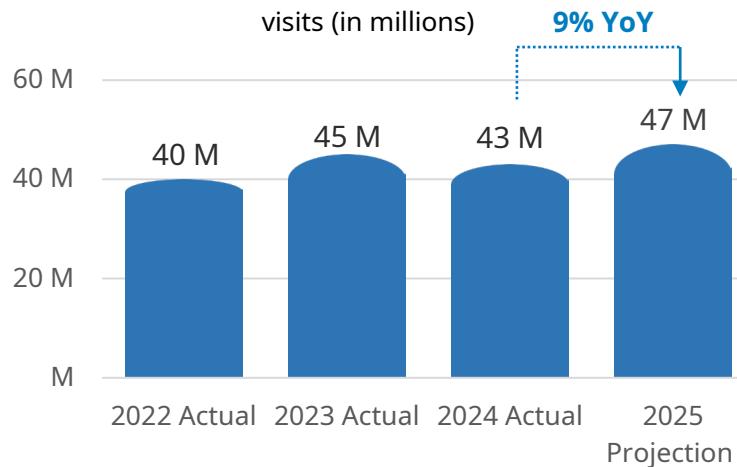
2 Implement strategies to support social connection, civic engagement, and the health & well-being of Torontonians, with a focus on the most vulnerable people and communities.

- Services to reduce Seniors' social isolation
- Social & Crisis Support Services
- Programs that teach and provide opportunities for civic engagement and social connection

3 Provide new and expanded learning opportunities and digital access so that residents can thrive, build economic resilience, and adapt to new technologies, such as AI.

- AI Upskilling programs and technologies
- Financial Empowerment
- Expanded children's literacy programs
- Newcomer Entrepreneurship

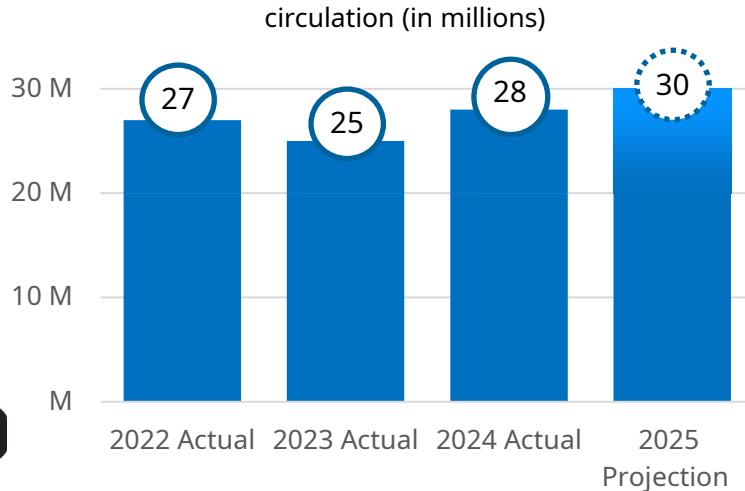
poverty reduction initiative



how well we are doing

continued growth in visits & borrowing

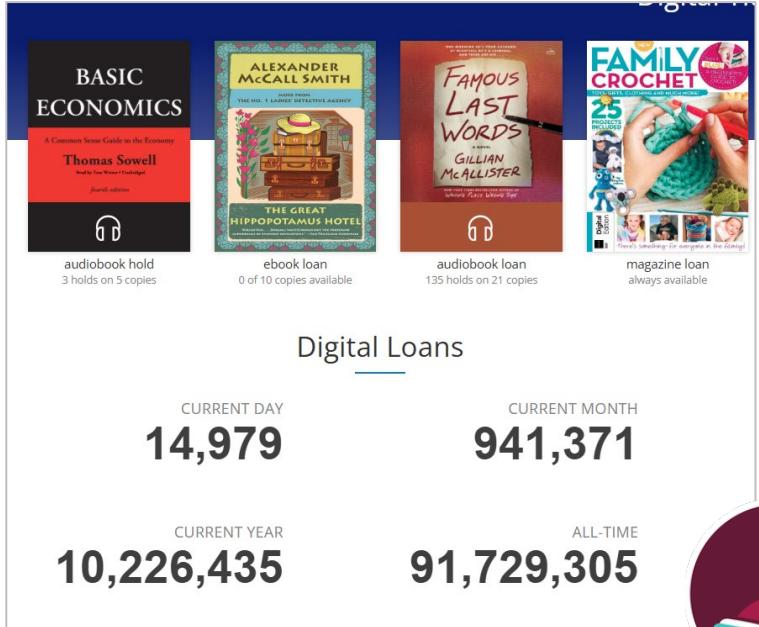
- Total Visits (Virtual + Physical) expected to **grow 9%** in 2025 showing growing demand for both digital and physical library services.
- With increased open hours into 2026, TPL expects total visits to continue trending upwards.



- TPL's inventory of physical and electronic materials supports discovery, access and learning.
- Steady increase in circulation since the 2023 cybersecurity incident.
- Circulation growth is expected to continue with additional investment in library materials to keep pace with growing demand and the increase in open hours.

+ demand for physical holds ↑13% since 2019

how well we are doing strong demand for eCollections



first library in the world to
reach **90 million** digital loans

will reach **100 million** loans
Q1/2026



Libby.

how well we're doing

library usage, trends and perceptions

Overall usage of TPL services surpassing pre-pandemic levels, with users reporting high satisfaction with TPL services.

81%

Torontonians used their library in the last year

up from 68% in 2019

91.5% customer satisfaction with the library

93% of Torontonians agree that public libraries are an important resource for the community

Sources: Forum 2024 Survey of Toronto Residents and 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey

“

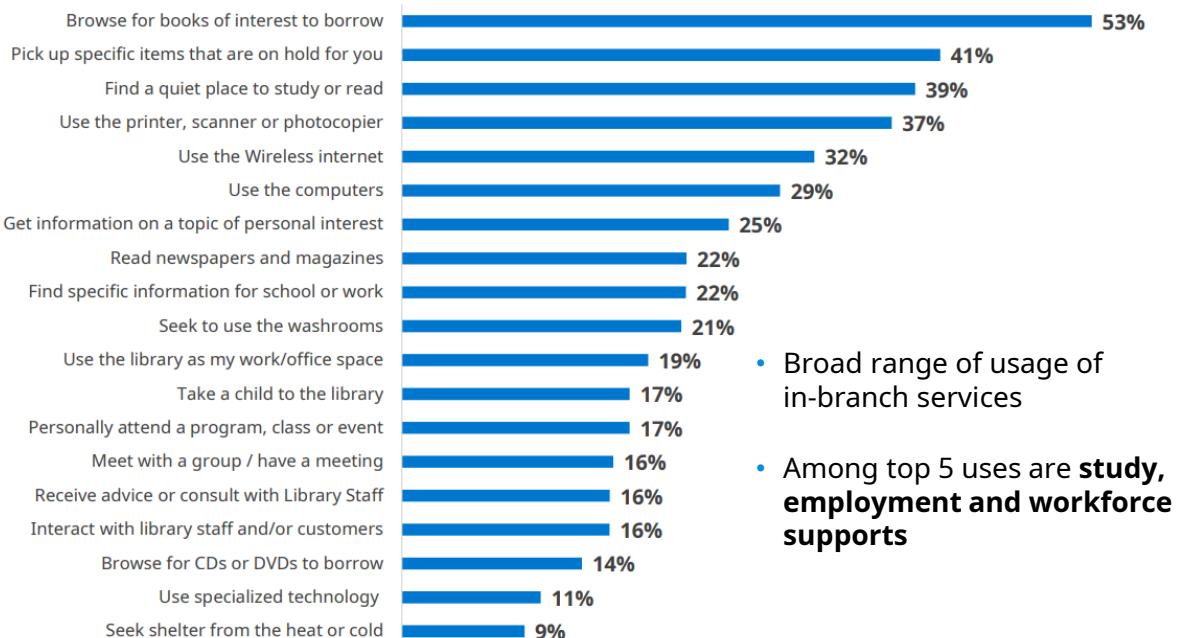
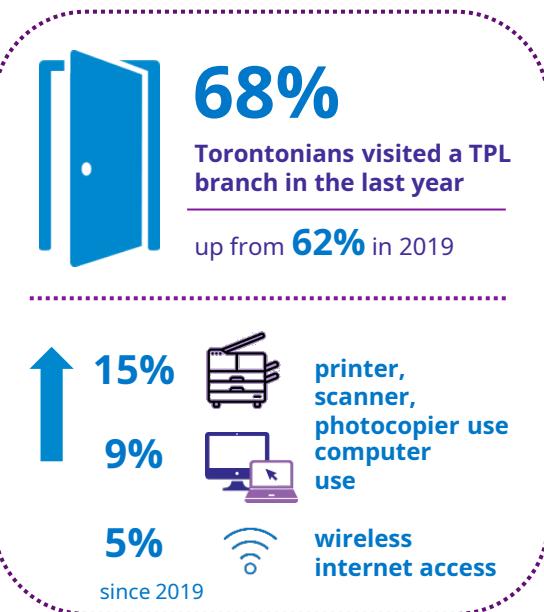
Martin Hrobsky, Ipsos senior vice-president of public affairs, said the satisfaction levels with recreation programs and libraries are particularly high in Toronto compared with other polling they've done in large metropolitans across Canada.

Sources: Ipsos 2025 Listening to Toronto Survey

how well we're doing

library usage, trends and perceptions

In-branch visits have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, with increasing usage of in-branch technologies.



Source: Forum 2024 Survey of Toronto Residents

how well we're doing

library usage, trends and perceptions



in-person programs

21,139 programs

attended by

421,083 participants

645 Sunday programs

attended by

8,792 participants

Jan – June
2025

↑ **8.9%** increase
in attendance over 2024

↑ **34%** increase
in Sunday programs over 2024

“

Toronto Public Library remains a **cornerstone** of the community, providing essential support for lifelong learning, literacy, and social connection, deeply integrated into the social fabric of Toronto.

- Forum Research, 2024 Survey
of Toronto Residents

how well we are doing creating safe and welcoming spaces

85%
library users
feel welcomed
at the library

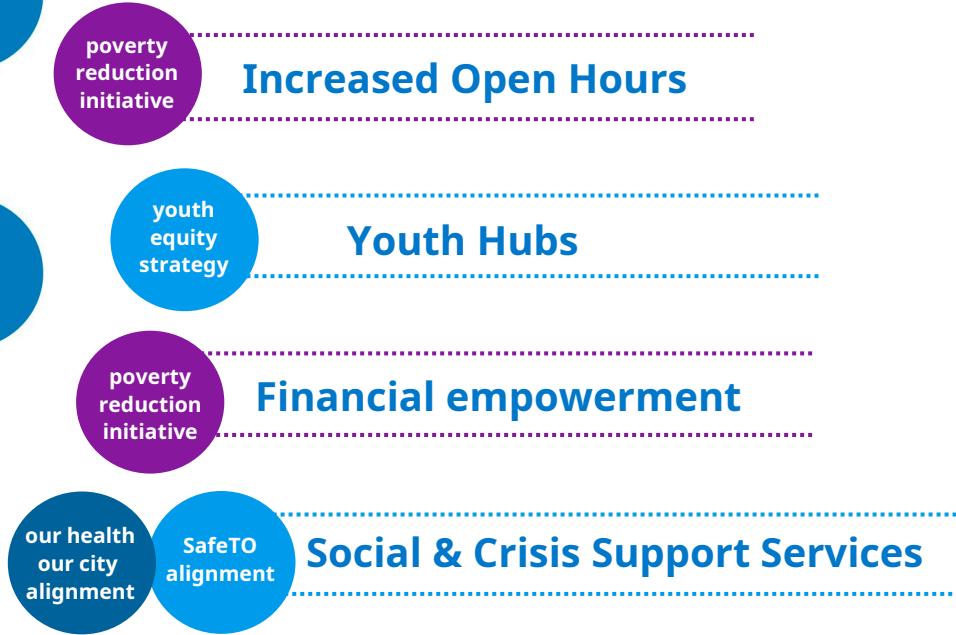
Source: Forum 2024 Survey
of Toronto Residents

Safety and security program update

2026 actions include:

- Expansion of Library Safety Specialists in branches
- Mental health first aid training
- Opioid overdose response training
- Trauma-informed Training
- Introduction of washroom overdose sensors

how well we're doing: outcomes



2025 budget enhancements resulted in increased use of critical library resources,

especially for equity-deserving groups, supporting **digital and social inclusion, and economic and academic success.**

They also helped to advance **key City of Toronto strategic priorities**

how well we're doing: outcomes

poverty
reduction
initiative

Increased Open Hours

Three phases over three years (2024-2026)

Expanded Monday to Saturday hours, more branches offering Sunday service, and increased Sunday hours.

- Phase 1 (2024) added Mon-Sat hours to eight branches and Sunday hours to eight branches. 67 of TPL's 100 library branches are open on Sundays in Phase 1.
- Phase 2 (2025) expanded Mon-Sat hours to sixteen branches. All library branches **open Sundays all year round** in Phase 2.
- Phase 3 (2026) adds Mon-Sat hours to seventeen branches. All branches will be **open seven days all year round**.

For branches which received
increased Open Hours

500K ↑
total visits

80K ↑
Sunday visits

8% = 43K+
budget increase increase in
hours open

2024 to 2026

“

The new hours are so helpful. I literally found a new job in part because I could access their computers in a timely manner.

- TPL customer

how well we're doing: outcomes

blue circle icon
youth equity strategy

Youth Hubs

- Expanded number of Youth Hubs by three for a total of **31 locations**
- Providing welcoming spaces for teens in or near priority neighbourhoods.

129k teens accessed TPL's 28 Youth Hubs

January – August 2025

"Thank you for the support. As a new immigrant this is a great opportunity for me to meet new people"

2330 programs offered with
17,700 participants

FOOD REACH

A social enterprise of North York Harvest Food Bank

TPL branches are

31% of Food Reach's customers

15% of Food Reach's gross revenue

"WOW! I can't believe these programs are free! Thank you so much."

poverty
reduction
initiative

Financial Empowerment

- Financial counselling and supports for low-income Torontonians in partnership with expert community agencies.
- Program began in September 2022 and is in its fourth year of operation.

\$5M+

unlocked by participants through tax-filing and help accessing benefits

49 group programs on financial topics

32 tax clinics

almost
3,000
one-on-one
consultations

Sept. 2022 – June 2025

“ Ms. Y. was so competent in her field and my income tax went so smoothly and perfect.

- TPL customer

our health
our city
alignment

SafeTO
alignment

Social & Crisis Support Services

- Low-barrier mental health and crisis supports in library branches in partnership with Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS), Gerstein Crisis Centre
- Program began in July 2023 and is in its third year of operation.

One-on-one supports
2,224 crisis interventions

Group wellness & addictions recovery programming
5,694 participants in **797** sessions

“

“It is an environment where I can be **vulnerable** and try to **survive and thrive**. There are very few environments where you can do all three.”

- Social & Crisis Support Services Customer

July 2023 -September 2025

how well we're doing: outcomes

ConnectTO alignment

Digital Equity

After using TPL's technology services, customers reported

75% increased digital comfort

83% advanced employable skills or career goals

Source: 2023/24 Bridge results

Digital Innovation Hub +
Pop-up Learning Lab programs

944 programs attended
by **8805 learners**

97% satisfaction rate

AI Upskilling programs

30 cohorts with
471 learners

98% satisfaction rate

Jan - July 2025

Apr - Aug 2025

84% advanced goals

94% increased confidence

how well we're doing: outcomes

focus on reconciliation and equity & inclusion

Indigenous Initiatives

Year-round programming for all ages

44 programs

900+ participants

Jan - Aug 2025

2SLGBTQ+ Initiatives

Year-round programming for all ages in collaboration with community partners

67 programs

1,127 participants

Jan - July 2025

Those identifying as transgender, non-binary or two-spirit are the most frequent library users, with a usage rate of 89%.

Newcomer Initiatives

Entrepreneur Initiative

Business planning, marketing, financial literacy programs and workshops

68 programs

597 participants

Jan - Aug 2025

Year-round programming

English language conversation circles, citizenship supports +

662 programs

7,770+ participants

Jan - July 2025

Settlement services

Settlement agencies providing services and programs for newcomers in library locations

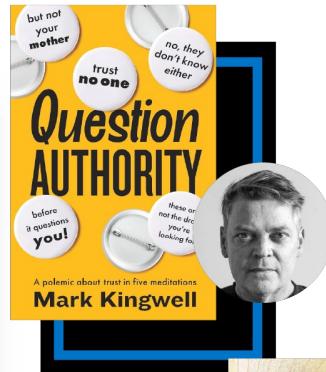
6918 one-on-one consultations

394 programs with 8334 participants

Jan - Aug 2025

how well we're doing: outcomes

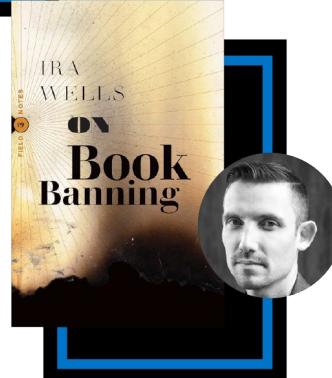
Focus on Democracy, Intellectual Freedom and social connection



TPL Intellectual Freedom Staff Curriculum

Level 1: Intellectual Freedom 101: Key Concepts and Library Practices

Level 2: Intellectual Freedom: Library Policies & Procedures in Action



- Special edition Intellectual Freedom library cards
- Sold-out Freedom to Read Week programming
- New comprehensive Intellectual Freedom curriculum for TPL staff

2026 operating & capital budget overview

operating budget

	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Projection	2026 Budget	2025/2026 Change (\$)	2025/2026 Change (%)
Revenues	21.971	18.757	20.965	21.129	2.372	12.6%
Gross Expenditures	256.229	273.301	277.172	301.919	28.618	10.5%
Net Expenditures	234.258	254.544	256.207	280.790	26.246	10.3%
Approved Positions	1,906.2	1,950.8	1,920.8	2,033.0	82.2	4.3%

10-year capital budget and plan

	2026 Budget	2027-2035 Budget	Total
Gross Expenditures (\$M)	102.129	595.566	697.695
Funded by Debt (\$M)	53.666	434.409	488.075

2026 budget priority actions

1 Increase Library Open Hours to:

- help advance and increase the impact of key City of Toronto strategies
- manage increasing demand for library services
- increase access to achieve greater digital inclusion; increased children's literacy; and reduced barriers for equity-deserving groups, including vulnerable seniors and youth.

2 Enhance our physical spaces to **create welcoming, safe, inclusive, accessible and sustainable environments** that build resilience and belonging.

3 Enhance TPL's **Safety & Security Program** with new training, staff and technology supports to ensure a welcoming, safe environment for staff and customers.

4 Introduce new programs that **strengthen social connections, increase civic engagement and expand access to information** to build a stronger, healthier democracy and empower Toronto's residents

5 Add more **community-based services** so the library can meet people where they are, at their point of need.

6 Advance TPL's **digital strategy** to modernize, connect and secure TPL's data and technology environment to optimize the library's business operations, and enable digital inclusion and literacy to deliver an excellent customer experience

2026 operating & capital budgets

key issues and opportunities

- Continuing to expand access to TPL spaces and services through **increased Open Hours**
- **Managing inflationary pressures** as demand for service continues to increase
- Ongoing **safety and security** of customers and staff
- **Modernizing enterprise technologies** for efficiency and risk reduction
- **Investing in branch network and IT infrastructure** to support growing and evolving demographics
- Manage **recruitment** volume and **organizational churn**
- Reducing **SOGR** and **AODA** backlogs
- **Transforming and expanding branches** to meet service levels

2026 operating budget submission

2026 operating budget overview

2026 Net Budget Change

	FTEs	\$ Million	% Change
2025 Council adjusted budget	1,950.8	\$ 254.544	
Annualization of prior year approvals	49.7	\$ 11.075	4.4%
Base budget changes	25.0	\$ 14.606	5.7%
Total base budget change	74.7	\$ 25.681	10.1%
New and Enhanced			
Budget enhancements	7.5	\$ 0.565	0.2%
Total change for enhancements	7.5	\$ 0.565	0.2%
Total budget change	82.2	\$ 26.246	10.3%
2026 Operating Budget Submission	2,033.0	\$ 280.790	10.3%

City Net Budget Target: **\$274.4 million**, which represents a \$19.856 million change, or 7.8%, over 2025

2026 operating budget

annualization of prior year approved initiatives

	2026 Net Budget Change		
	FTEs	Net	% Change
Open Hours - Phase 2	-	3.851	1.5%
Open Hours - Sunday service expansion	-	2.708	1.1%
Open Hours - Phase 3	16.0	0.877	0.3%
Open Hours - Monday service expansion	33.7	2.284	0.9%
	49.7	9.720	3.8%
Youth Hubs expansion	-	0.444	0.2%
Digital Innovation Hubs expansion	-	0.098	0.0%
Financial Empowerment Services	-	0.248	0.1%
Social & Crisis Support Services	-	0.565	0.2%
Annualization of prior year approvals	49.7	11.075	4.4%

annualization of prior year approvals

\$11.075 M; 4.4%

2026 operating budget base budget changes

	2026 Net Budget Change		
	FTEs	Net	% Change
Salaries and benefits	-	10.938	4.3%
Economic factors	-	4.238	1.7%
Other base budget changes	25.0	1.275	0.5%
Efficiency measures	-	(1.846)	-0.7%
Base budget changes	25.0	14.606	5.7%

base budget changes
\$14.606 M; 5.7%

2026 operating budget budget enhancements

	2026 Net Budget Change		
	FTEs	Net	% Change
Financial Empowerment Service expansion	0.5	-	0.0%
Social & Crisis Support Services expansion	1.0	0.565	0.2%
Reducing Seniors Social Isolation	6.0	-	0.0%
Budget enhancements	7.5	0.565	0.2%

new and enhanced initiatives
\$0.565 M; 0.2%

2026 operating budget

2026 summary and 2027-2028 outlook

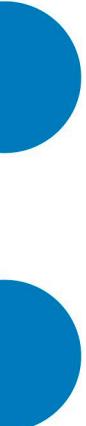
	2026			2027			2028
	FTEs	Net	% Change	Net	% Change	Net	% Change
2025 Council adjusted budget	1,950.8	254.544		280.790		300.290	
2026 Base budget change							
Annualization of prior year approvals	49.7	11.075	4.4%	1.808	0.6%	-	0.0%
Base budget changes	25.0	14.606	5.7%	17.692	6.3%	24.012	8.0%
	74.7	25.681	10.1%	19.500	6.9%	24.012	8.0%
2026 Operating base budget							
2026 Budget enhancements	7.5	0.565	0.2%	-	0.0%	0.248	0.1%
Total 2026 Budget change	82.2	26.246	10.3%	19.500	6.9%	24.260	8.1%
2026 Operating Budget and 2027-2028 Outlook	2,033.0	280.790	10.3%	300.290	6.9%	324.550	8.1%

total budget change
\$26.246 million; 10.3%

No. 12 – 2026 operating budget submission

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. Approves the 2026 operating budget submission of \$280.790 million net (\$301.919 million gross), which represents an increase of \$26.246 million net (\$28.618 million gross), or 10.3% increase, over the 2025 operating budget as detailed in Attachment 1, comprised of:
 - a. a base budget of \$280.225 million net (\$299.680 million gross), which represents an increase of \$25.681 million net (\$26.379 million gross), or 10.1%, and is comprised of:
 - i. annualization of prior year approvals of \$11.075 million net (\$10.262 million gross), or 4.4%; and
 - ii. base budget changes for incremental staffing and benefit costs of \$10.938 million net and gross, or 4.3%; and
 - ii. Other base budget changes of \$3.667 million net (\$5.178 million gross)
 - b. service enhancement requests totalling \$0.565 million net (\$2.239 million gross), or 0.2%.
2. Authorizes staff to forward the 2026 operating budget submission to the City for consideration.



thank you
questions?