



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library – Thursday, April 23, 2026

Date: September 29, 2025

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to place before the Toronto Public Library Board a request from the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF) to hold Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library (TRL) on Thursday, April 23, 2026.

The Foundation's request is described in the attached memorandum. It sets out the anticipated advantages for both the Foundation and Toronto Public Library (TPL) in hosting the event at TRL and the impact it would have on service to the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves the request from the Toronto Public Library Foundation to host the 2026 Biblio Bash gala fundraiser at the Toronto Reference Library on Thursday, April 23, 2026, including full closure of the branch on April 23, 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Proceeds from Biblio Bash will be used to enhance and expand library services as per TPL and TPLF's agreed upon fundraising priorities. TPLF will cover all event costs as well as costs for additional cleaning and security (as needed) other than the direct TPL staffing costs including branch, venue rentals, digital services and facilities staff who will be required to support the event. Costs for these staff, including extra hours or overtime as required, will not result in any incremental budget requests and will be accounted for within the 2026 operating budget submission for TPL.

The estimated revenue projection for Biblio Bash 2026 is \$1,100,000.

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

ISSUE BACKGROUND

While the landscape of fundraising events in Toronto continues to be competitive, TPLF believes there is a tremendous opportunity to differentiate this event from other not-for-profit galas and deliver a meaningful and memorable evening including hosting it in a unique space, the Toronto Reference Library.

Biblio Bash 2025 was met with great enthusiasm, raising an unprecedented \$1,070,100 in support of the Toronto Public Library with a significant portion of funds raised directed to youth social health and wellness initiatives and services.

This event attracts some of Toronto's high-profile philanthropists, bringing in many new and strategic supporters to the Library. Given the positive profile of TPL, there is an opportunity to build on this momentum and attract even more supporters to the Library.

COMMENTS

Holding Biblio Bash at TRL is a unique opportunity for both the Library and the TPL Foundation. It is a chance to showcase TRL as a premier venue destination, and demonstrate, in a very visual and experiential way, what today's vital and vibrant library is capable of.

The goal of the gala is to:

- increase net funds in support of Toronto Public Library;
- design a beautiful, memorable and awareness-building event that connects guests to the Library;
- demonstrate the critical role TPL plays in supporting the residents of Toronto and leave attendees wanting to know more about the Library;
- generate relevant print and digital media coverage about TPL and TPLF; and
- attract a new audience of philanthropists, city builders and entrepreneurs in order to provide them with meaningful ways to invest in the library and the health and well-being of Toronto.

Service Impacts

Hosting Biblio Bash at TRL will have unavoidable service impacts on Thursday, April 23, 2026, including a full closure of the branch for which the public will be provided with advance notice. The TPL Foundation has identified its broadest anticipated needs for space and closures. As more detailed plans are developed, adjustments may be made where possible to further reduce service impacts.

Service Hours & Service Implications

The TPL Foundation has requested that TRL close for the entire day on Thursday, April 23, 2026, in order to complete the set-up for the event itself and ensure there is as little disruption as possible to staff and users.

Services will be fully reinstated by branch opening, 9:00 a.m. the following

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morning, with the exception the first floor terrace computers in the Information Commons which will be made available by 1:30PM.

Staffing Implications

Staff would normally be scheduled to work until 8:30 p.m. on the proposed night of the gala. Within the provisions of the Collective Agreement, and given two weeks' notice, staff schedules will be adjusted to have staff relocated and/or to work a day shift finishing by 5:00 p.m. While staff would not be serving the public on April 23, 2026, there are many activities and training that they could usefully perform while the library is closed. Pages and part-time staff normally scheduled to work that evening and not able to work during the day will have their hours rescheduled at an alternate and mutually agreed upon time. Staff in the Answerline Department will continue to work onsite until 8:30 p.m. and leave by staff exits or will work remotely where feasible. All other TPL staff groups located at TRL will report to work as normal and leave by 5:00 p.m. by the staff exits.

Safety and other Environmental Issues

In advance of the day, Biblio Bash setup plans will be reviewed by Facilities to ensure Health & Safety standards are met. Most of the audio visual and production set-up and takedown that would be most disruptive to service would take place during the evening preceding and following the gala when the library is closed. However, there will be significant set-up and preparation required during the day on April 23, 2026, in the areas where the gala activities are to be held. There will be noise, movement of furniture, and additional use of the elevators along with other possible impacts not yet fully determined throughout the day. Where possible, measures will be taken to reduce/minimize impact on staff in the building. As needed, environmental impacts to Answerline and any other staff spaces will be tested and any issues mitigated before 5:00 p.m. the day of the event.

Additionally, it has been confirmed that the construction schedule for the TRL Re-Imagine project will reflect a blackout date for April 23, 2026. No construction will take place on the interior or exterior of the building on this date.

CONCLUSION

With over 15 years of experience hosting this event (Book Lovers' Ball and Biblio Bash), TPLF and TPL staff anticipate that the gala will achieve the outcomes of attracting current and new philanthropists, raising both funds and awareness of the TPL brand, and creating an enchanting and memorable experience for all. TPLF and TPL staff will be working in concert to ensure that there is minimal impact on service beyond what is stated in this report and look forward to a successful gala.

CONTACT

Heather Mathis; Director, Branch Operations & Customer Experience;
Tel: 416-393-7152; E-mail: hmathis@tpl.ca

SIGNATURE

Moe Hosseini-Ara
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Memorandum from Will Scott, Toronto Public Library Foundation dated September 29, 2025 requesting approval to hold the Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library in 2026.

MEMO

Date: September 29, 2025

To: Moe Hosseini-Ara, City Librarian

From: Will Scott, Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Public Library Foundation

RE: **Toronto Reference Library as venue for Biblio Bash**

SUMMARY

This Memo requests that Toronto Public Library (TPL) approve the use of the Toronto Reference Library branch as a venue for Biblio Bash, the Foundation's annual fundraising gala.

The event would take place on Thursday, April 23, 2026. For set-up purposes, the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF) would require full closure of the Toronto Reference Library as of 8:30 p.m. on April 22, 2026.

BENEFITS OF HOSTING BIBLIO BASH AT THE TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY

The goal of this fundraising event is to elevate the TPL brand amongst philanthropists and city builders; to demonstrate it is a critical civic institution that plays an essential role in the health and prosperity of this city; to showcase TPL as the great equalizer where everyone has free and equitable access to library resources to maximize their economic and social potential.

The gala objectives are:

- Revenue target \$1,100,000
- Attract 40-60 new donor prospects to the Library
- Create local and national media buzz
- Increase social media followers

The event will be designed to attract philanthropists that represent the diverse audience we serve. This will include well-known Toronto philanthropists and will be expanded to include new Canadian communities, entrepreneurs in technology and health and leaders in business. Hosting the event at the Toronto Reference Library also provides the opportunity to showcase its spaces and collections, and to highlight what donor support helps make possible, thereby encouraging potential future donations.

SERVICE IMPACTS

The Foundation appreciates the importance of minimizing the service impacts of hosting a major event in the Toronto Reference Library and has consulted with senior Library management and venue rentals staff. Set-up for and hosting of an event of this scale will necessitate full closure to the public of the Toronto Reference Library as of 8:30 p.m. on April 22, 2026. Based on explorations to date, the Foundation is confident the public service impacts detailed in the following staged set-up will be the maximum required in order to contain costs and ensure the greatest possible amount of fundraising revenue from the event:

Tuesday April 21, 2026

- Atrium, 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor balconies – audio visual and production set-up, including rigging and staging install, partial load in of décor, ensuring access to service points, collections, washrooms and exit/entrances remains unaffected; Toronto Reference Library (TRL) Facilities staff to ensure all installations meet health & safety standards (after 8:30 p.m.)
- Space to be determined within TRL where to best store audio visual equipment overnight **on the first floor and third floors;** (after 8:30 p.m.)
- Novella will be reserved for deliveries, power, storage of audio-visual equipment and 2nd floor furniture; (after 8:30 p.m. and following any teardown of events booked earlier on this date)

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

- Continue Atrium, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floor balconies – audio visual and production set-up, including rigging and staging install, partial load in of décor, ensuring access to service points, collections, washrooms and exit/entrances remains unaffected; TRL Facilities staff to ensure all installations meet health & safety standards (after 8:30 p.m.)

- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon – reserved for deliveries, power, storage, etc. of audio-visual equipment and 2nd floor furniture; setup of Prologue and Novella for volunteers (after 8:30 p.m. and following any teardown of events booked earlier on this date)
- TPLF will use one of its date allocations, per TRL shared use models, to reserve, Beeton Hall, Founders Room, and Sonnet Room for the day by TPLF and key vendors (event management agency and caterer).
- Space to be determined within TRL where to best store audio visual equipment **on the first floor** (available all day).

Thursday, April 23, 2026

- Full closure of the Toronto Reference Library to the public with signage posted at least one week in advance advising patrons of the change.
- Removal of the first 40 computers on the ground floor of the Information Commons.
- Administration area to be used by the catering team to transport food from shipping/loading dock to Beeton Hall. Extra security will accompany the catering team at all times.

Friday, April 24, 2026

- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon and public areas on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors **cleaned and restored by 6:00 a.m.**
- Beeton Hall to be cleaned and restored by 6:00 a.m.
- 2nd floor Information Desk to be restored to normal by 9:00 a.m.
- Information Commons computers restored to normal by 1:30 p.m.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Branch, venue rentals, digital services and facilities staff are required to support the evening event and will be supported by TPL's operating budget. As a result, there may be extra hours offered to staff.

The TPL Foundation will cover all the event costs as well as costs for additional cleaning and additional security (as needed) other than the direct TPL staffing costs including branch, venue rentals, digital services and facilities staff who will be required to support the event. Costs for these staff, including extra hours or overtime as required, will not result in any incremental budget requests and will be accounted for within the 2026 operating budget submission for TPL.

REQUEST

It is requested that the Toronto Public Library Board approve, in principle, full closure of the Toronto Reference Library on April 23, 2026, as well as closure of select other spaces during open hours as detailed in this report.

SIGNATURE

Will Scott
Chief Executive Officer
Toronto Public Library Foundation
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