

AN OVERVIEW OF BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY



ABOUT BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

For more than 129 years, Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) has been among New York City's most democratic institutions offering essential educational, enrichment and economic advancement resources—all for free. Through our flagship Central Library, Center for Brooklyn History and 60 neighborhood branches, BPL provides resources that support personal advancement, build civic engagement, and strengthen the fabric of community. A BPL library card is a key that opens the door to the Library's myriad offerings.

In a borough where 18% of residents live in poverty, including one in five children, and where the costs of necessities often take priority over spending on cultural and educational opportunities, BPL's free resources and programs are critical to ensuring all people have the tools they need to become productive and self-sufficient citizens. Patrons are welcome to come into the library for five minutes or spend all day, without ever having to spend money. From storytime sessions and early literacy programs to after-school homework help and college prep, ESOL and adult literacy classes, resume and job counseling resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs, and enrichment for older adults, BPL provides the tools Brooklynites need to achieve their goals and realize their dreams. And we offer millions of opportunities to enjoy one of life's greatest satisfactions: the joy of a good book.

While we are grateful for the support we receive from the City, public funds alone are not sufficient to meet the growing demand for our services. Private funding ensures we can reach as many people as possible and also allows us to pilot new, innovative programs to test their efficacy before becoming part of our core offerings.

Libraries are a foundation of civil society and a beacon of intellectual freedom at a time when censorship and book banning are on the rise. They are more essential than ever to the neighborhoods they serve. And they need your support.

FAST FACTS

BPL was established in 1896 and today is one of the largest library systems in the nation, with 62 locations throughout the borough.

Most of Brooklyn's over 2.7 million residents live within a mile of a BPL branch. BPL's collection holds over 3.13 million physical items and digital materials.

Highlights from fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026) include:

- **10,456,997** materials circulated, including books and electronic media.
- **5,841,524** visits to our branches.
- **209,565** new library cards issued.
- **86,626** free in-person and virtual programs with **843,581** attendees.
- **2,085** outreach visits to schools, shelters and community-based organizations.
- **732,776** computer sessions and **1,583,140** WiFi sessions.
- **Over 13.1 million** website visits and **over 700 thousand** email newsletter subscribers.

BPL's FY27 operating budget is \$169.6 million. The City of New York provides 85% of the budget, with the remainder coming from state and federal government, private donations, endowment income and earned revenue. Program services account for 90% of the budget.

WHAT WE DO



Children & Families

From **multilingual storytimes** to **Brainy Babies** and **Ready, Set, Kindergarten!**, BPL offers early literacy programs that increase language, literacy and social skills in the youngest Brooklynites, while teaching caregivers techniques to support learning at home. Other programs designed for young and school-age children include **Summer Reading**, **Brooklyn Robotics League** and **Inclusive Services**, which provides unique programs for children with and without disabilities.

Teens

Internships abound at BPL and teach the next generation of leaders critical skills for success including communication, collaboration, leadership and research. These include **Librarians of Tomorrow**, **BookMatch Teen**, **StoryTeen**, **CBH Teen Scholars** and **Teen Techies**. Other programs aimed at teens include **Future 101**, which provides one-on-one college guidance; five teen tech centers, including the **Best Buy Teen Tech Center**; and the **Freedom to Read Ambassador program**, which equips teens with the tools needed to advocate for intellectual freedom.

School Outreach

We work closely with schools throughout Brooklyn and NYC to ensure students and teachers obtain and use library resources to enhance the learning experience of students via programs like **Meet the Author**, **Brooklyn Connections**, which provides standards-based, Brooklyn-centric curricula and teacher development, and **New York City History Day**, a regional contest in which students create projects based on original historical research and analysis.

Adult Education & Workforce Development

BPL has a continuum of programs and resources **for adults** that support educational and economic advancement. Programs include **pre-High School Equivalency classes**, English Language classes, GED testing, job certification trainings and **Bard Microcollege at BPL**. BPL's **Business & Career Services** offers one-on-one job search and resume counseling, **PowerUP!** business plan competition, **BKLYN Fashion Academy** and **LevelUP** workforce advancement program. **Pathways to Leadership**

supports certifications in librarianship for non-librarian staff.

Older Adults

BPL serves **older adults** wherever they are—whether in our branches, their homes or local senior centers—with programs like **Creative Aging** arts classes, **Technology for All** computer classes aimed at older adults and **Books by Mail** and **Books to Go**, which provide collections to home-bound adults and those living in senior centers. BPL hosts a popular older adults resource fair every spring.

Immigrants

The Library is often the first stop for newly-arrived immigrants and offers a range of resources to meet their needs.

New Americans Navigators provide one-on-one assistance to connect people with legal assistance, housing, food and healthcare, legal clinics and resource fairs at BPL locations. In addition to **English for Speakers of Other Languages classes**, BPL offers **citizenship prep classes**; New Americans Corners at all our branches, which provide citizenship and immigration resources; collections in more than 30 languages; telephonic interpretation services in over 240 languages; and ongoing translation of library card applications and program and marketing materials.

Justice Initiatives

BPL supports incarcerated and formerly incarcerated patrons and their families with specialized library services and early literacy workshops for parents in NYC jails. **TeleStory** provides free televisiting services to connect people with incarcerated loved ones in New York state prisons, and **Welcome Home** helps formerly incarcerated patrons transition back into public life through one-on-one navigation, workshops and peer support. Library books are regularly distributed at NYC jails.

Community Health

Health literacy programs and resources are provided at branches in partnership with community-based organizations and government agencies. The Library's **Social Work Program** connects patrons with referrals to housing, employment, food assistance, behavioral health resources and health insurance, while

Brooklyn Supports provides resources and support for patrons experiencing homelessness and other challenges.

Digital Inclusion

To help bridge the digital divide, the Library offers classes on computer basics, online privacy, AI, cyber security and software programs; lends laptops to patrons in need; and provides public computers, 1:1 tech support and free WiFi at all branches. Outside the Library, the **Neighborhood Tech Help** program provides individualized support at community locations in the areas of digital literacy, access and inclusion, and a WiFi enabled **Techmobile** brings technology to community spaces throughout Brooklyn.

Arts & Culture

BPL provides free, high-quality cultural programming to thousands of Brooklynites every year throughout the branches, as well as the **Library for Arts & Culture**. **BPL Presents** offers a curated program of author talks, live performances, music, film and exhibitions. **Culture Pass** provides free admission to more than 100 NYC cultural institutions, and the annual **Brooklyn Public Library Book Prize**, selected by BPL librarians, highlights noteworthy works of fiction and non-fiction.

Research & Archives

The **Center for Brooklyn History** is a research library and community hub that houses the most comprehensive archive of Brooklyn history in the world. Free and accessible to all, its trove of special collections, exhibits and programs brings our borough's rich history to Brooklynites of all ages, and the **Othmer Library** is a haven for research, archives and ephemera on all things Brooklyn.

Books & Other Collections

BPL is, above all, a circulating library with a collection of nearly **3 million physical and digital books** and materials, **as well as** vinyl records, musical instruments, telescopes, household tools and board games to lend. To combat the disturbing rise in censorship nationwide, **Books Unbanned** supports young adults who are facing bans and challenges to books in their local schools and public libraries by providing free library cards allowing access to our digital collections.

BRANCH MAP

Bklyn
Public Library

