

ELIZABETH FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY



ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

Strengthening Community | Building Connections | Enriching Lives

Board of Trustees 2017

Ted Freedman, President

Kevin Weaver, Vice President

Eloy Delgado, Treasurer

Pearl Serratelli, Secretary

Kenyetta E. Jackson

Anne Russell

Earnestine Smith

Ex-Officio Members

Mayor J. Christian Bollwage

Olga Hugelmeyer, Schools Superintendent

Alternates

Christian Veliz

Veronica Alvero

Administration

MaryFaith Chmiel, Library Director

Andy Luck, Assistant Director

Department Heads

Adult/Information Services – Jose Ruiz-Alvarez

Branches – Robert Barbanell

Children's – Claudia Flores

Circulation – Cathy Abbate/Lisa Bennett

Maintenance – Paulo Goulart

Technical Services – Lynn Lampariello

As President of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of the City of Elizabeth, I am pleased to offer this 2016-2017 Annual Report to our elected officials and the community.

This fiscal year was an exciting one, as we embraced new opportunities, like the partnership with Groundwork Elizabeth to create community gardens, and the hiring of strong new team members like Assistant Director Andy Luck and Head of Children's Services Claudia Flores.

Improved community outreach, as exemplified by Senior Librarian Nancy Berkenfeld, made the Library more visible, more responsive and more relevant than ever. Ongoing technological improvements cement the importance of Library services to the less advantaged members of our community, while the introduction of the Elizabeth Municipal ID Card was a landmark event, the culmination of months of collaboration with the Mayor, the City Council, the Health Department and the Library. We also acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Sara Cullinane, New Jersey Director of Make the Road, in creating the EMID card.

No doubt there is still much to do, including the upgrade of public bathrooms at both Main and Elmora, to make them ADA compliant; the eventual expansion and resurfacing of the Elmora parking lot; and the replacement of multiple heating and air-conditioning components; nevertheless, the Library Trustees, together with the Library administration and staff, have plotted a course toward continued success, improvement and enrichment.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and Library Director Mary Faith Chmiel, I would like to thank Mayor Bollwage and the City Council for the tremendous support they have provided to the Elizabeth Public Library.

We are proud to share this recap of FY 2016-2017 with you.

Theodore A. Freedman

Board President

*Welcome to the Elizabeth Public Library's
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2016-2017.*

Revisit with us the year's successes and triumphs, the new projects initiated, the new resources introduced to the community, and the hardworking staff and trustees that make our library such a valuable community resource.

One proud moment occurred in the summer of 2016, when we took our first forays into community gardening, with the six bed garden at our Elmora Branch. Our new partner, Groundwork Elizabeth, built the beds and offered seedlings, while our staff and volunteers did the rest.

In September 2016, in partnership with Literacy New Jersey, the Elizabeth Public Library was awarded a NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development grant for \$91,000 to increase English-language learning and provide High School Equivalency (HSE) coursework to area residents. This funding also allowed the purchase of ten iPads for training and classroom instruction.

New developments in our Local History Department will delight those curious about the history of the City of Elizabeth. Our website now features the digitized Elizabeth Daily Journal, 1872-1914, a project funded, in part, by a NJ Historic Commission Grant of \$11,000.

Fiscal Year 2016-2017, was filled with excitement; FY 2017-2018 promises more of the same!

*Mary Faith Chmiel
Library Director*

Our Buildings

Just in time for the school year, we unveiled our new classroom spaces on the third floor. Using Library reserve funds, we



contracted with BFI, an Elizabeth firm, to create space for literacy students, citizenship classes, and teen activities.

For Funding Year July 2016 - June,

2017, the Library was awarded \$68,060 in Community Development Block Grant funds to upgrade the first floor public bathrooms at our Main location. Construction work did not begin until October 2017. Look for our improved facilities in spring 2018.

Working in partnership with the City Health Department, the Library converted the Quiet Room on the 2nd floor into the hub for the Elizabeth Municipal ID Program. Inside this secure room are the computers and equipment that guarantee a vetted and valid card for all residents. In the adjacent space, applicants can complete paperwork and request assistance from knowledgeable volunteers.

In the summer of 2016, we became gardeners, thanks to a Union County



Means Green Grant awarded by the County Freeholders, and administered by Groundwork Elizabeth. The Elmora Branch backyard became the site of teen volunteer activity under supervision of Teen



Services Manager Tracy Robinson. Groundwork Elizabeth supported us all the way and, shortly afterwards, approached the Library about turning the vacant lot at 195 Bellevue



Street in a 50-bed community garden.

Work on this larger initiative began in spring 2017, as Groundwork Elizabeth established

beehives, an Ag Lab and more on the Library grounds.

**Twilight meeting
April 2017**



Technology



Thanks to our Library consortium, LMxAC, we started offering text messages about item holds, due dates and overdue notices.

We strengthened and updated our internal computer network, making it more robust in preparation for bandwidth expansion that would bring faster Internet service.



Yes, we're looking at a total bandwidth capacity of 1 GB!

A smart TV in our larger classroom allows for the projection of presentations, streaming video, and other content from a laptop. Our 100-plus public PC terminals are often busy for up to twelve hours a day, thanks to a diligent tech support team led by Edwin Lopez, and our computer lab

stays busy with multiple weekly classes taught by Edgar DeJesus.

Programs & Partnerships

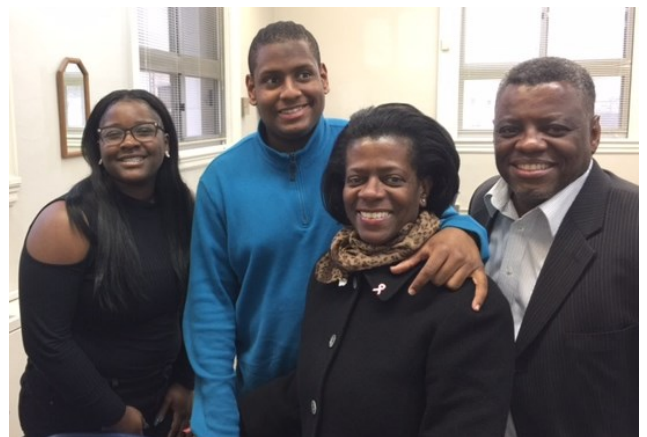
To support our community of English-language learners, we created our ESL Express collection and gave it a prominent location on our third floor, easily visible to our literacy and citizenship students.

Biographies came back! We always had them, but for a long time biographies and autobiographies were shelved with the Dewey Decimal cataloging number representing the subject's area of fame or expertise. So basketball players were found somewhere in the 700's—as were singers, songwriters and musicians. Confusing, right? Starting with our LaCorte and Elmora branches, we began pulling books about 'real people' from those obscure numbers and began shelving them alphabetically by the subject's last name. At last you can find those books about Beyoncé or Johnny Cash!

Early in 2017 we hosted the National Archives touring exhibit on the Bill of Rights.

Working with the International Rescue Committee, we provided Library tours to newly arrived immigrants throughout the year.

In partnership with the City of Elizabeth we initiated the Elizabeth Municipal ID (EMID) program in January 2017. Approved by Resolution of the City Council in November 2016, the ID provides proof of residency and identity, while also serving as a full-service Library card.



Councilwoman-at-Large Patricia Perkins-Auguste with her son and EMID staff as her son obtains a City ID.

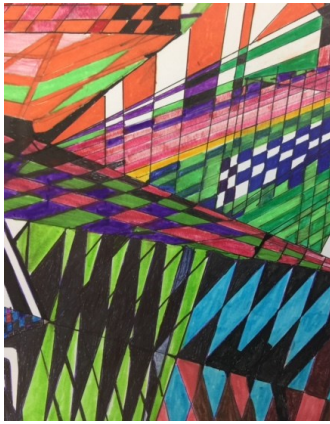
In February, the Elizabeth Public Library became part of the Baby Box Company network, distributing free 'baby boxes,' a Finnish tradition being introduced into the USA by a grant from the Bezos Foundation. Baby Boxes are a first bed for newborns and come furnished with a washable mattress, along with a supply of diapers and baby wipes.



More recently, Infant CPR kits have been added to the Baby Box distribution kit. These items can be obtained, free, from the Library after the parents complete an online course entitled Baby University.

Exhibits

We didn't ignore the arts, and the importance and impact of the visual arts. In FY 16 17 we hosted



- ♦ Jim DelGiudice, photographer
- ♦ Local artist Suree Minnatee
- ♦ The geometric art of Tony Rodrigues
- ♦ Young artists

from William F. Halloran Middle School #22

- ♦ Collagist extraordinaire and painter Derek Jay Dent
- ♦ Women artists of the Elizabeth Arts Council
- ♦ Photography by Jan Bogdanski
- ♦ Cool Art in June, a group show presented by the Elizabeth



Arts Council

Outreach



The Elizabeth Public Library hit the streets and parks to meet our community and to bring Library information to the public.

- ♦ National Night Out
- ♦ Julyfest
- ♦ Historic Midtown Car Show
- ♦ Back to school nights at
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Frances C. Smith
Joseph Battin
John Marshall
- Family Fun Day
- The Tri-County History
Fair, hosted by Plainfield
Public Library
- Union County Focus on Youth Forum



Statistics

Literacy NJ - Elizabeth Public Library Partnership

Tutors or volunteers working at the library	50
ESL Total #Classes	32
ESL Total #Participants	228
ESL Summer 2016 Conversation Group #Participants	10
ESL Fall 2016 Conversation Group #Participants	9
ESL Winter/Spring 2016-2017 Conversation Group #Participants	15
ESL Winter 2017 Elmora Conversation Group #Participants	17
ESL Spring 2017 Elmora Conversation Group #Participants	6
GED Total #Classes	5
GED Total # Participants	217
GED Total # Students Passed	25
Basic Literacy Total #Participants	12
Total # tutoring hours for the fiscal year	3, 054
Computer Literacy Fall 2016 morning #Participants	5
Computer Literacy Fall 2016 evening #Participants	8
Computer Literacy Winter 2017 evening #Participants	4
Open Computer Lab Fall 2016 #Participants	14
Open Computer Lab Winter 2017 #Participants	15

AARP Tax Volunteers

347 tax returns were electronically filed and accepted.

35 questions were answered for clients who did not have to file a tax return.

329 appointments scheduled

132 walk-ins serviced

Elizabeth Public Library Statistics

Door Traffic

Main	265,681
Elmora	105,359
Eport	49,810
LaCorte	59,204

Circulation

Total Circulation	114,103
AV Circulation	9,494
LMxAC Digital Item Circulation	3,068
Items Added	10,594
Courier Deliveries	9,904

Attendance

Juvenile Programs	7,986
Teen Programs	3,009
Adult Programs	3,241
Computer Classes	808

Public PC Usage

Main	9,852
Main Wifi	20,435
Elmora	2,258
ePort	1,561
LaCorte	782
Branches Wifi	4,265

Local History Resources

Visits	76
Local History Requests	74
Microfilm Use	492
Elizabeth Daily Journal	14,106

Adult Programming

Adults could chose from a wide variety of educational, instructional or entertainment events.

- ♦ The Elizabeth Resolutes, a 19th century baseball team, lived on again when members of the resurrected team appeared in in full replica uniforms and equipment on September 10th.
- ♦ Marty Schneit offered a history of the Borscht Belt on November 6th at our Elmora Branch.
- ♦ The annual Fall Concert Series brought us music from Kean University piano students.
- ♦ Hickory Tree Chorus regaled us with holiday music in December.
- ♦ Visitors got to meet the 'world-famous' Coupon Queen, Susan Samtur, on Thursday, Jan 12th.
- ♦ As part of Black History Month, we hosted *13th*, the academy-award nominated film, on Feb 11 and followed the showing with an energetic open discussion.
- ♦ The NJCH Horizons Speakers Bureau Program brought us "When Artwork Speaks: Eyewitness Images from the American Revolution."
- ♦ In the spring we hosted Holocaust remembrance and Genocide awareness programs at Elmora. Terrence Hoben shared his experiences of the Rwandan Genocide in the 1990's, while the



following Sunday, Margit Feldman, a Holocaust survivor, presented her documentary on her childhood experiences.

- ♦ Our book sales at the Main and Elmora branches gave everyone a chance to get in on the fun!



- ♦ And our weekly movies, at the Main, LaCorte, and Elmora branches, brought free entertainment to adults, families and kids.



Teen Services

Our Teens enjoyed a second round of The Great Stories Club under the guidance of Teen Services Manager Tracy Robinson. Fifteen students gathered on alternate weeks to read and discuss important topics and issues, as portrayed in contemporary literature.



We joined the national movement called Girls Who Code (but not necessarily limited to girls) in January 2017 with students in grades 6-8.



New fixtures and furnishings created a warm and inviting space for teens to study, relax or socialize.

Children's Services

Under the leadership of our new Head of Children's Services, Claudia Flores, our children's department was refreshed and revitalized.

There was
Homework
Help...

Got Homework? We can help!	Tienes Tareas? Podemos Ayudar!
Homework Helpers will be here on Mondays & Thursdays 4:30pm - 6:30pm Children's Department No registration required Begins January 9th	Tendremos ayudantes para los deberes Lunes & Jueves 4:30pm - 6:30pm Departamento de Niños No requiere registraci3n Comienza el 9 de Enero
This program will be run by volunteers. It is advised that you call before coming to be sure you can be assisted.	Este programa ser1 administrado por voluntarios. Se recomienda llamar antes de venir para asegurarse que ser1 atendido.
FREE	GRATIS

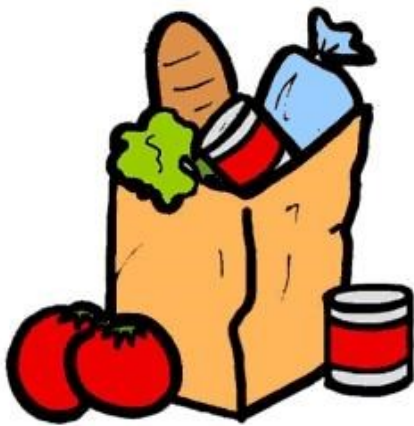
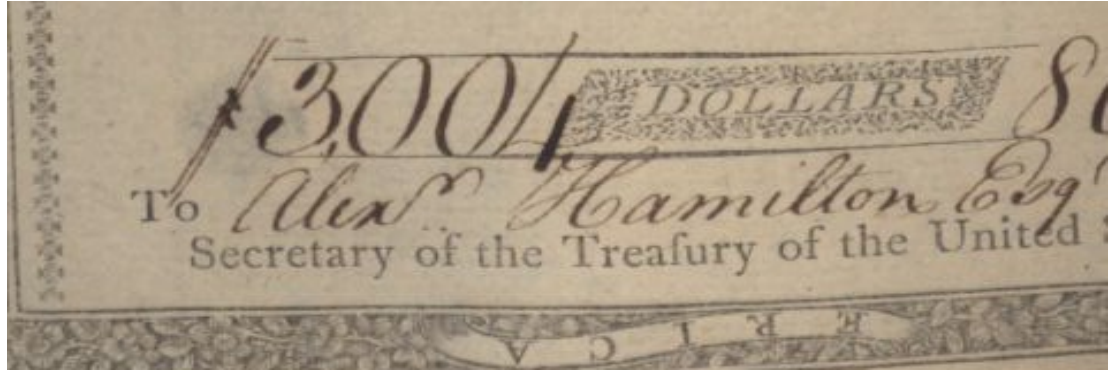
And Baby & Me...



Plus puppet shows,
musicians & magi-
cians, balloons,
bubbles & Book
Bingo. Parents and
kids can visit
Tumblebooks,
animated, talking
picture books which
you can read or have
read to you, available
via [www.elizpl.org/
databases.html](http://www.elizpl.org/databases.html)

Special Events

We hosted visiting organizations, including the Alexander Hamilton Association and the Bank Museum of America on July 7th, both of which were eager to see original Alexander Hamilton documents owned by EPL.



In September, Children's Specialized Hospital, in conjunction with the City of Elizabeth Health Department, offered free health screenings to children 9 months to 4 years old.

We collected 260 items for the LUCC food drive; coats and shoes/sneakers were also collected for different organizations. Food donations were delivered to StreetLight Ministries.

In February Family Link, a non-profit Early Intervention agency, visited the Children's Room for a pajama story time. While the Library provided stories, crafts and parachute fun, the agency provided each child with a goodie bag containing a set of pajamas.



Our summer reading club activities and participation surged, thanks, in large part, to the financial support provided by the Union County Freeholders Children's Grant. The numbers tell the story, as children and families came out to meet Michelangelo, the mini therapy horse, to play Book Bingo, and to experience "Bugs on the Go."



Eport:	2016 July: 368	2015 July: 186 (+97.8%)
LaCorte:	2016 July: 289	2015 July: 239 (+20.1%)
Elmora:	2016 July: 279	2015 July: 247 (+13%)



Summer Reading

Local History & Special Collections

The Cannonball Incident

Aimee Fernandez-Puente, the ever diligent and conscientious manager of the Local History Room, had read of a Civil War era cannonball that had exploding recently, causing serious destruction and death. Aimee immediately thought of a very similar object that has been in the Library's possession since the Joe Keenan era.

For many years this item had been located in a closet outside the Assistant Director's Office and was moved into the Local History Room only when Aimee assumed management of the space. On January 11, 2017, Aimee notified Administration of the potential hazard and the police were called. Shortly afterward we were visited by Elizabeth Police, Elizabeth Fire-fighters, officers from the Union County's Sheriff's Department and finally, by the county hazmat team, who carted away the questionable item.

Our story ends happily as the cannonball dates, not from the Civil War era, but, rather, from the Revolutionary War. And continues to reside peaceably in our Local History Room.



Elizabeth Daily Journal Digital Archive

Aimee applied for and received a New Jersey Historical Commission Project Grant for the digitization of the Elizabeth

Daily Journal. The first 112 reels of microfilm from the collection, covering January 1872-August 1915, were digitized and an online archive was created. Usage of this valuable local history research tool averaged 1930 views per month. Visit <http://www.digifind-it.com/elizabeth/newspapers.php>

HSENJ Annual Forum & Rotary's 100th Anniversary

Aimee worked with the on the history of the Rotary of Elizabeth in preparation for their 100th anniversary, April 21, 2017. This project culminated with Aimee co-chairing the Historical Society's Annual Forum, held May 24, 2017, which focused on the economic and social development of the City of Elizabeth over the last 100 years. The forum was attended by over 130 high school students, administrators, and city officials.

Historical Society of Elizabeth



Left to Right: Bill Mealia, Rotary of Elizabeth; John Prescott, History Program Coordinator, Union County Cultural and Heritage Affairs; Ken Ward, President, Historical Society of Elizabeth; Mayor Chris Bollwage

Cuban Voices / Voces Cubanos

Aimee began working with the Snyder Academy on their grant-funded project capturing the voices and memories of Cuban immigrants to Elizabeth in the 1950's and 1960's.

STAFFING

Aimee Fernandez-Puente was one of the honorees at the 2016 Snyder Academy Awards



Monica Eppinger resigned from the position of Assistant Director for the position of Director at the Woodbridge Public Library

Andrew Luck, formerly with Paterson Public Library, came on board as Assistant Director of EPL

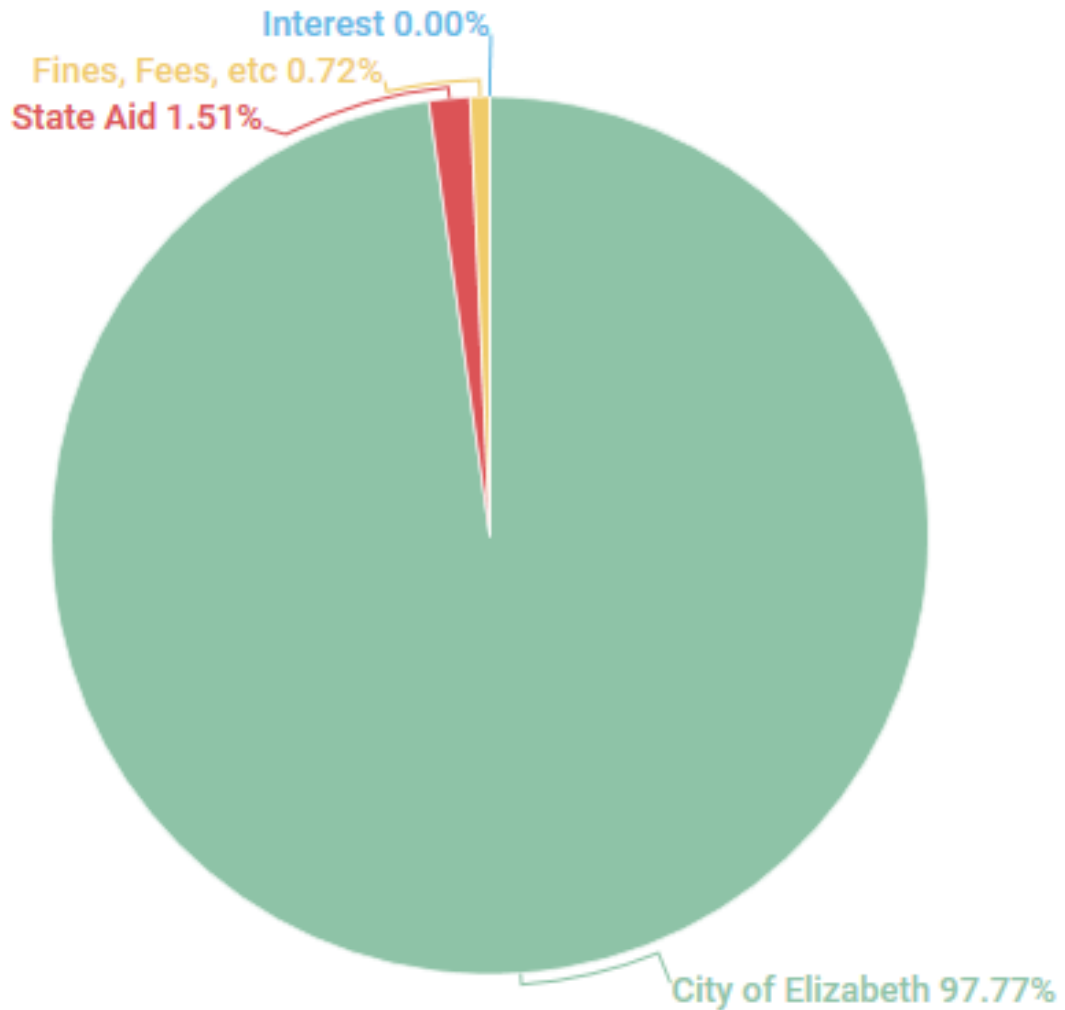
Claudia Flores, formerly with Plainfield Public Library, became our new Children's Services Supervisor in September 2016

Nancy Smith, long-time reference librarian, retired in October 2016

Budget Matters

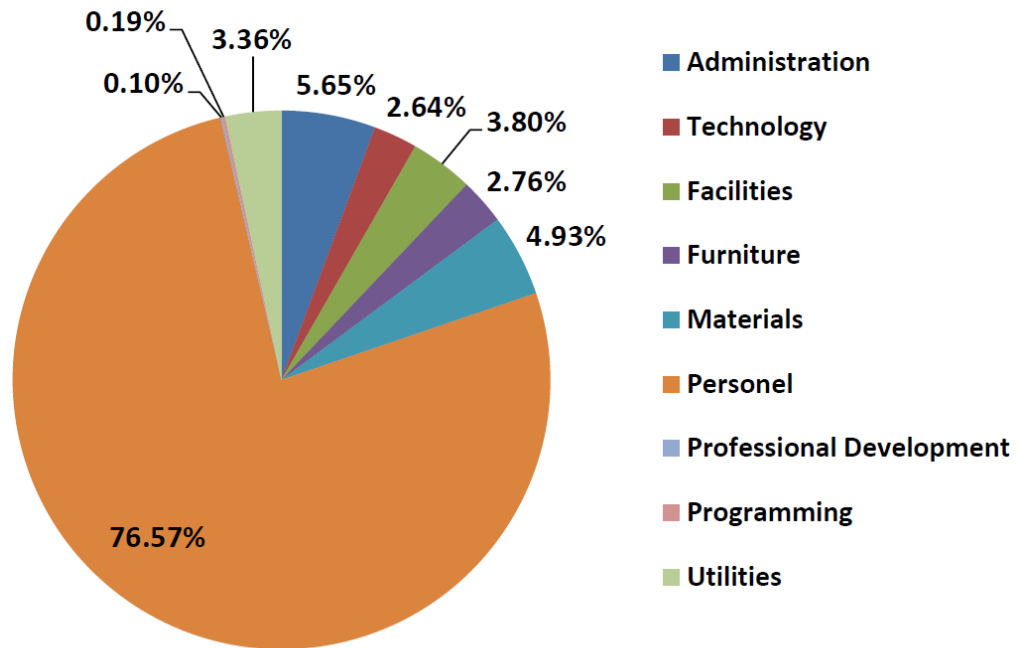
\$4,103,373

Where the Money Comes From

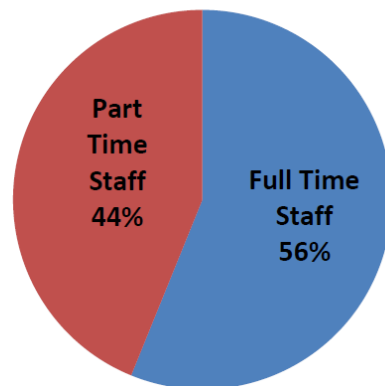


● City of Elizabeth ● State Aid ● Fines, Fees, etc ● Interest

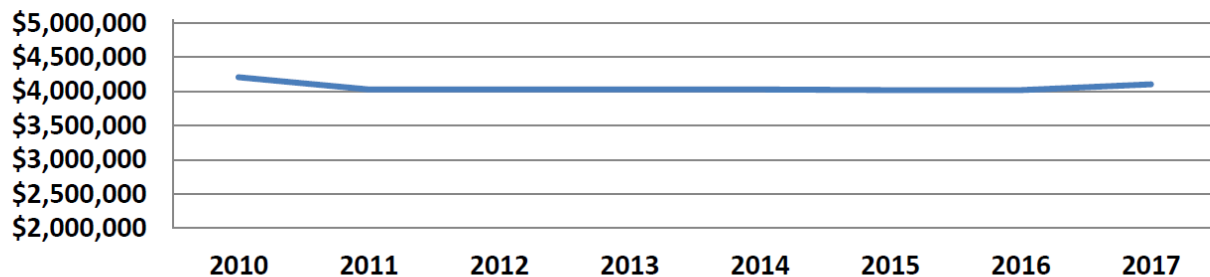
Library Expenditure 2016 -2017



Library Staff 2016 - 2017



Total Library Budget



Budget Matters

\$2826115.16

Personnel Costs

