ELIZABETH FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY



ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

Strengthening Community | Building Connections | Enriching Lives

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As President of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of the City of Elizabeth, I am pleased to offer this 2017-2018 Annual Report to our elected officials and the community of Elizabeth.

A public library's ability to help its patrons make new connections is one reason public libraries are such an asset to any community. Helping a patron access new services and information, leading readers to new discoveries and fostering learning for every age - all these opportunities provide residents with the next rung on their personal ladder. The Elizabeth Public Library strives to improve both the quality and quantity of connections we provide to the residents of this city.

In the most recent fiscal year, Elizabeth Public Library created better connectivity by increasing our internet network bandwidth to 1GB at all our branches. Recognizing that our lives have become busier and busier and more and more activities take place on line, EPL determined that greater bandwidth for both our public computers and our wifi network were crucial.

The Library also strove to strengthen the connections that make us part of the community by substantially increasing our presence at non-library events and locations throughout the city. Our new Head of Info and Adult Services, Ally Blumenfeld, whose arrival revitalized her department, was instrumental in this regard. Meanwhile our Children's and Teen Departments built upon earlier successes, with more school visits and greater visibility at community events. In addition we continued established partnerships with non-profit organizations, offering ESL classes and GED prep through Literacy New Jersey, and tax preparation help through the AARP.

A recent partnership with Trinitas Hospital regularly brings quality health information to the public, and our ongoing collaboration with Groundworks Elizabeth means bigger and better things at the community garden located at our Elmora Branch. Not least of all, we helped the City provide hundreds of residents with access to a municipal ID.

Finally, we improved our facilities by making the public restrooms at our Main Branch ADA compliant and rebooted the layout of our LaCorte Branch. New chairs at our public computers throughout Main freshened the space, as did new tables and seating in our larger classroom.

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 2017-2018 with you.

Theodore A. Freedman Board President

Elizabeth Public Library Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

This past year was the year of Outreach for the Library. You could almost say our motto was "Have Tablecloth, Will Travel," especially since, with a Health Literacy grant received in January 2018, we purchased a branded canopy tent and a colorful tablecloth that make us more visible than ever.

In partnership with Shaping Elizabeth, we offered programs on pedestrian safety and healthy eating. We made guest appearances at City Health Fairs, at Proceed, at the Bayway Success Center, and at Project Ready. Our Teen and Children's staffs visited schools, hosted schools and demonstrated the "fun" of libraries and reading to over 10,000 students. We staffed tables at JulyFest, the San Vito Fest and National Night Out, and participated in Back-to-School bookbag giveaways in Elmora and Peterstown. We worked with the YWCA, the YMCA and the NJ Mental Health Association .

We continued to offer the Elizabeth City ID, in conjunction with the Department of Health & Human Services, and began offering free lunches to children 18 and under through the Recreation Department. We partnered with Elizabeth Destination Marketing and the Snyder Academy to bring Celebrate HAMILTON to the community.

Your Library aims to be the heart of the community and, sometimes, the best way to do that is by being where *you* are.

Mary Faith Chmiel
Library Director

Our Buildings & Grounds

The most popular service EPL offers to the public? Internet access? Computer instruction? Storytimes for children? The convenience of four branches? Coding classes? While all of those are undoubtedly popular, our most popular utility or service is surely our public restrooms.

And, in FY 2017-2018, we were able to offer newly remodeled and ADA-compliant lavatory facilities to the public at our Main location for the first time in almost 60 years. Working



with funds awarded for Funding Year July 2016 - June, 2017, through a Community Development Block Grant, the Library began demolition work on the first floor public bathrooms in October 2017. The identification of 10 linear feet of asbestos resulted in weeks of delay, but the final results, unveiled in May 2018, are pleasing and much appreciated.

A Library contribution of \$59,000 and a CDBG investment of \$88,060, allowed us to widen the doors to both restrooms and to create wheelchair-accessible stalls. We thank the Mayor and the City Office of Community Development for their support in this overhaul of our circa 1965 bathrooms!

At our LaCorte location in the Peterstown Community Center, we worked with a New Jersey State Library grant to bring a SWAT Team of Library Transformers to the branch. The result

was a reconfiguration of the layout for our staff desks, followed by rearrangement of our public computers. The result is improved sightlines for our staff, and more open space for visitors. New window blinds provided by the City Recreation Depart-



ment aided in our transformation. Coming soon in FY 2018-

2019: new carpeting covering the children's area and the computer section.

At Elmora, the transformation of our grounds continued, as Groundwork Elizabeth, in partnership with the Library



Trustees and the City of Elizabeth created a 50bed Community Garden in the vacant



lot at 195 Bellevue Street. With the support of our resident bees (yes, we have beehives), our gardens are flourishing!

Throughout the Spring of 2018,

visitors to the Elmora Branch undoubtedly noticed the disappearance of the many trees that edged the property. These were found to be diseased, and regrettably had to be removed. We anticipate the planting of new trees in the near future.

Meanwhile, our Library Garden continues to flourish, with help from GWE who have begun installing geopavement in the center of the Library's six beds. This will allow more visitors to our garden, and make tending the garden easier for our volunteers.



Also at Elmora, an Energy Savings Grant allowed us to update the lighting and the HVAC unit on the roof. And Groundwork Elizabeth created a great garden greeting for us on the front lawn.

Finally, to ensure the safety of our staff and the public, the County Prosecutors Office conducted a Building Vulnerability Assessment of 11 South Broad Street.

Technology

Throughout the first few months of 2018 we worked on the migration of our branch phone services from standard telephone lines to VOIP, voice over Internet. Finally completed in early July 2018, this project was part of a larger plan to increase our network bandwidth to 1000 mgs, or 1 GB.

The bandwidth expansion allows for more 'space' for our public wifi and our surveillance camera feed, as well as the cost savings associated with VOIP. In FY 13-14, we were budgeting approximately \$100,000 annually for telephone and Internet services; in FY 18-19, we anticipate spending just over \$1100 a month for similar services.

In the spring we replaced our aging projector in the auditorium with a \$10,000 new model so we could continue to offer state-of -the-art services to the community.

We finished the year with the excitement of direct digital marketing, with the installation of six TVs throughout our Main location. These broadcast our current and upcoming events, making it easier for visitors to find information about our services and programs.



Programs & Partnerships

Working with Literacy New Jersey, we provide classroom and tutoring space for English-language learners and those hoping to achieve a high school diploma.

In FY 17-18, ten students completed the work for and passed the test for a high school diploma. Congrats to all!



In April, in

support of these non-traditional students, the Library began offering high-school equivalency testing in the 3rd floor computer lab, under the aegis of the New Jersey Department of Education.

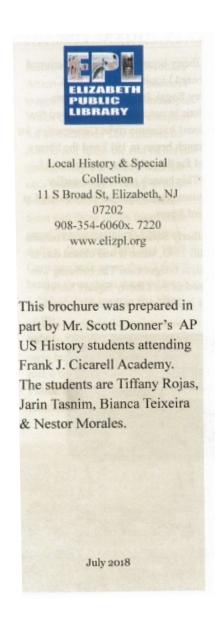
At tax time, volunteers from AARP, backed by Union County tech support, visit the Main location to provide free tax prep

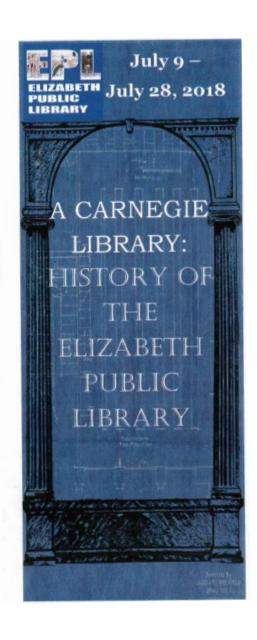


assistance for taxpayers of all ages and all economic levels. Over the course of 10 weeks, over 300 people

received priceless help completing their tax returns.

In March we hosted a state-wide event for librarians on services for immigrant populations, and, in April, 61 new or expectant mothers joined us for a Community Baby Shower. In October, and again in May, we collaborated with the Elizabeth School District on teacher training and student learning. EPS library media specialists visited the Library to learn about the many resources available for their students; while 80 AP History students dove into a research project using the resources of the Local History Room.





Exhibits

We didn't ignore the arts, and the importance and impact of the visual arts. In FY 17-18 we presented

- Leo Osorio, photographer
- The arts & crafts of Gini
 Mason Pagdon
- Water colors by Ray Horner
- A Staff Friends & Family
 Exhibit, featuring photography



© Ray Horner

by Claudia Flores, bound books by Tracy Robinson and artwork from Benny Cortez's niece, Violeta Monje-Medina's sister and Lilian Rivera's husband

Collagist extraordinaire and painter Derek Jay Dent

Derek Jay Dent



- Women artists of the Elizabeth Arts
 Council
- Students participating in a Coalition to House the Homeless art program
- Photography by Jan Bogdanski
 - Cool Art in June, a group show presented by the Elizabeth Arts Council

Our Library Consortium

Since joining the library consortium LMxAC in 2015, we've been able to offer residents of Elizabeth access to 30 other

libraries in the Union, Middlesex and Monmouth county areas. Show your Elizabeth card to check out materials!

Plus, participation in the consortium automatically expands the range of books that we can offer to our cardholders, with up to up to 3.2 million holdings.



Early in 2018 we began offering cardholders the option of adding their photo to their Library record in our secure system. This option allows patrons to checkout materials even when they don't have their card with them, as we are able to verify identities with the photo image.

Through our Library consortium, we offer access to the popular streaming service hoopla, providing music, audiobooks, ebooks and movie streaming free to our cardholders, while RB Digital provides access to popular magazines.

Statistics

Literacy NJ - Elizabeth Public Library Partnership

Tutors or volunteers working at the library	66	
ESL Total #Classes	60	
ESL Total #Participants	305	
ESL Summer 2017 Conversation Group #Participants	12	
ESL Fall 2017 Conversation Group #Participants	14	
ESL Spring 2018 Conversation Group #Participants	17	
ESL Fall 2017 Elmora Conversation Group #Participants	10	
ESL Winter 2018 Elmora Conversation Group #Participants	11	
Basic Literacy Total #Participants		
GED Total #Classes	5	
GED Total # Participants	218	
GED Total # Students Passed	33	
Computer Literacy Winter 2018 morning #Participants	9	
Computer Literacy Winter 2018 evening #Participants	22	

AARP Tax Volunteers

331 tax returns were electronically filed and accepted.
42 questions were answered for clients who did not have to file a tax return.
346 appointments scheduled
101 walk-ins serviced

Elizabeth Public Library Statistics 2017-2018

Door Traffic

Main	260,529
Elmora	100,922
Eport	51,115
LaCorte	60,472

Circulation

Total Circulation	113,946
AV Circulation	12,045
LMxAC Digital Item Circulation	5,197
Items Added	8,821
Courier Deliveries	10,032

Attendance

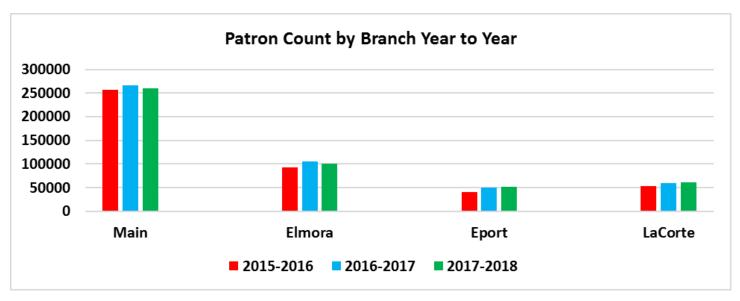
Juvenile Programs	7,082
Teen Programs	3,658
Adult Programs	4,915
Computer Classes	992

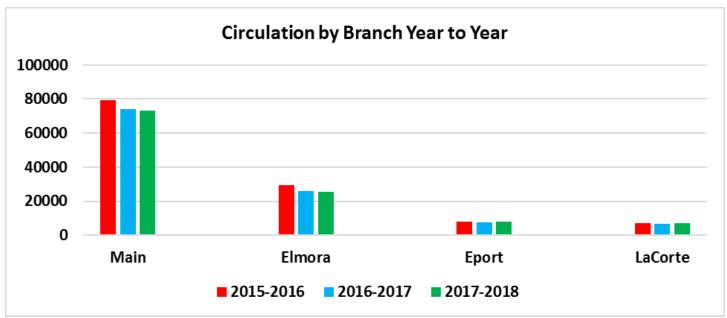
Public PC Usage

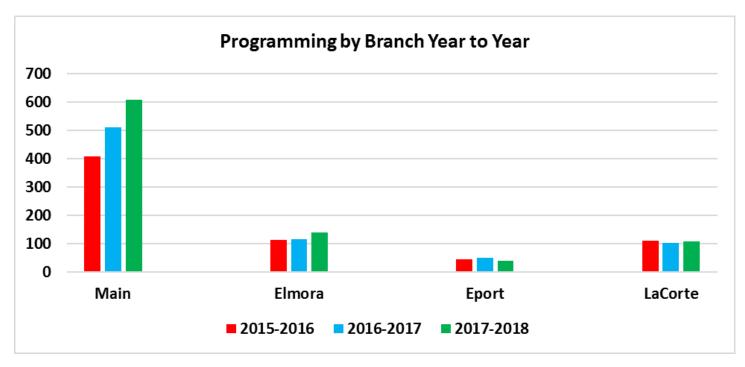
Main	8,144
Main Wifi	35,007
Elmora	1,603
ePort	823
LaCorte	441
Branches Wifi	4,446

Local History Resources

Visits	218
Local History Requests	77
Microfilm Use	459
Elizabeth Daily Journal	41,975







Adult Programming

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

- Readers participating in the Elmora Book Club shared their impressions of books as diverse as Christina Baker Kline's A Piece of the World and Edward Kelsey Moore's The Supremes Sing the Happy Heartache Blues.
- In November, future novelists were invited to participate in NaNoWriMo at the Library.
- The annual Fall Concert Series brought us guitarist Francisco



All concerts will be held in the Main Library Auditorium, on the Fourth Floor. Feel free to bring your lunch to the noontime concerts. Free and secure parking is available. For more information call 908-354-6060, x-7203.

Thursday, October 5 12:00 noon	3D Rhythm of Life/Ritmo de Vida Caribbean, jazz and soul
Thursday, October 12 7:00 pm	Francisco Roldán Spanish & Latin American Guitar Music
Thursday, October 19 12:00 noon	David Schlossberg Elegant Piano Music
Thursday, October 26 7:00 pm	Eco del Sur Music of the Andes
Thursday, November 2 12:00 noon	Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts Jazz Trio
Thursday, November 9 7:00pm	Moreno Fruzzetti Opera, Pop, & American Classics
Thursday November 16 12:00 noon	Kean University Piano Students Recital
Thursday November 30 7:00 pm	<i>RB Express</i> Doo-Wop, Oldies, & Retro Vocal Music

Funding has been made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts,
Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts,
through a grant administered by the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage
Affairs.









Roldán, singer Moreno Fruzzetti, and Kean University graduate Sara Edreira-Fidalgo on piano.

- In January, we kicked off our partnership with Shaping Elizabeth to present *A Better You in 2018*, a year-long series of healthy family fun.
- On February 10 we hosted a showing of the film *Detroit*, based on an historical event remembered as 'the Algiers Motel incident,' followed by a discussion led by staff.
- We celebrated April as National Poetry Month with 3 Blackout Poetry programs



and 3 Writers Playground programs.

- In April, we hosted five health events including a film screening for caregivers, community baby shower, and health screenings fair.
- The NJCH Public Scholars Program "The Ark, The Grail, and the Quest for Discovery" enthralled attendees on April 25.



- In May and June, we hosted John Andrews from the NJ Astronomical Association to present on the Planet Mars and Astronomical Hoaxes, Myths, and Misconceptions.
- Throughout the year, adults were provided with opportunities to learn coding and create art.
- Elmora again held a book sale in December, while the Main sale was moved to early June, so people could stock up on summer reading.
- Our weekly movies, at Main, LaCorte, and Elmora branches, brought free entertainment to adults, families and kids.
- And, not to be forgotten, eclipse day in August! Our eclipse glasses were very popular!





Teen Services

Thanks to a \$1,000 donation from Mayor Bollwage, the Teens

Dept. has organized a yearround, teen-led book club dedicated to social justice discussion, and action.

The resulting "Fearless Readers" circulating book club collection will launch later in 2018.



In cooperation with the Union County Office of LGBTQ Services and Garden State Equality, the Teens Dept. hosted



an "LGBTQIA+ Youth Caucus," which presented clear, actionable steps teens can take in their cities and schools to protect their rights as members of the LGBTQ community living in New Jersey. Freeholders Granados and Mirabella joined the students.

Outside of the library, the
Teens Dept.'s most successful
outreach effort was the "Trash
to Fashion Show" held at the
Union County CommUNITY
Picnic. Hundreds participated,
and Trustee Eloy Delgado said
that he was "beyond impressed"
by our community impact.



Children's Services

While continuing with our popular programs like Baby & Me

Why Fudge Bunch?

The name was picked in recognition of renowned children's book author Judy Blume, and her popular Fudge Series.

Did you know Judy Blume was born in Elizabeth, N.J.?

All the more reason to celebrate and join the book club!

(Fridays @ 10:30 am) and Homework Help (M & Th, 4:30-6:30), the Children's Department introduced MASST (Math and Science Storytime Programs) for preschoolers at both Main and Elmora and a tween program entitled Fudge Bunch.

In the Tween Zone kids 9-12

could create slime, shadow puppets and more.

For the littlest ones we offered 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, funded, in part, by the Union County Freeholders Children's Grant.

At Main and at the Branches kids celebrated Halloween and Dr. Seuss' birthday, Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year and a holiday visit from "Cookie Mouse."









Special Events



NJ Makers Day, held on March 10, was again a rousing success, with over 80 programs available on one day, and the participation of nearly 2000 patrons.

Programs included hydroponic

gardening, robotics, virtual reality, sewing, audio recording, loads of crafts, and so much more. Our staff and volunteers also enjoyed pizza donated by

> Eli's Pizza Pasta, fresh fruit donated by the Elmora Farmer's Market, and edible plants donated by



Groundwork Elizabeth. Over 100 beautiful photographs, courtesy of a professional photographer whom Tracy secured through Jersey Collective, commemorate the event.

Posts from our *Stuffed Animal Sleepover* showed the kind of mischief stuffed animals can get into when left to their own devices!



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.

Summer Reading

With continued support from the Union County Freeholders Grant for Children's Services, we offered another dynamic round of summer activities, including visits from live animals, superheroes, jugglers and puppeteers. A special highlight was a Pizza Pie Storytime with pizza-themed stories and craft, followed by a hands-on pizza-making demo—and a hot slice of pizza for each child, courtesy of Eli's Pizza Pasta!



The numbers tell the story:

A total of 994 children registered and read 8,913 books! A combined total of 85 Children's programs were offered with a total attendance 3,614 people.



Every house and car represents 5 books read. Children enjoyed building a city and putting their name on their houses and cars.

Local History & Special Collections

Elizabeth Daily Journal Digital Archive

Aimee applied for and received a New Jersey Historical Commission Project Grant to continue the digitization of the Elizabeth Daily Journal microfilm collection. This second phase of the project covered the September 1915 through January 27, 1922 editions, bringing the total number of microfilm reels digitized so far to 171. Usage of this valuable local history research tool has increased from 1930 views per month to 3501 views per month. http://www.digifind-it.com/elizabeth/newspapers.php

EHS Frank Cicarell Academy & Local History

Students from Mr. Scott Donner's AP U.S. History I at EHS Cicarell Academy, in conjunction with Boxwood Hall State Historic Site caretaker, Katherine Craig, and the Local History & Special Collections Dept. at EPL, took part in a test-pilot project researching various

subjects in local history and producing multimedia final presentations. Research for these projects was performed at the library's Local History & Special Collections Department. Subject matters ranged from the impact of the New Jersey Turnpike on the Bayway neighborhood, the history of the Elmora neighborhood, the redevelopment of the Elizabethport neighborhood to the history of Elizabeth Public Library and the history of theaters in Elizabeth. Final projects were presented by the students during their corresponding class periods at Cicarell Academy on Tuesday, June 19th and Wednesday, June 20th.



Historical Society of Elizabeth, N.J. 2018 Forum

Once again, the Local History & Special Collections Dept. assisted the Historical Society of Elizabeth, N.J. in researching the annual forum's subject: The Lincoln Highway and Travel Infrastructure. Elizabeth

Public Library also provided the venue for this year's forum, attended by over 100 students and their teachers and administrators. Speakers this year included: Ken Ward, President of HSENJ; Angel Estrada, Union County Freeholder and Chairman of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority; Manny Grova, Elizabeth City Councilman; Dr. David Tulloch, Rutgers University Professor specializing in geospatial technologies, environmental and land use planning; Bernie Coonie, Chair of the New Jersey Region of the Lincoln Highway Society.

Carnegie Libraries Summer Series

Local History & Special Collections, in conjunction with Union County's Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs and the New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance, hosted and presented at the first Carnegie Libraries Summer Series program: Carnegie Libraries of Union County on June 13. Representatives from five municipalities which at one time had Carnegie Libraries presented on their respective histories. In addition to Elizabeth Public Library, participating libraries included those of Westfield, Plainfield, Cranford, and Summit. Of the six Carnegie Libraries built in Union County, Elizabeth Public Library Main Branch remains the only active Carnegie library today. The sixth Carnegie Library built in Union County, the Liberty Square Branch of EPL, is now utilized by the city as a senior center.

Digital Exhibits

The Local History & Special Collections Department began creating

digital exhibits that correspond with our in-house physical exhibits as a means to highlight our collections. To view all our digital exhibits, visit www.elizpl.org/localhistory.html
Two samples of digital exhibits produce during this fiscal year are:

www.elizpl.org/TheHamiltonDocuments.html

www.elizpl.org/historicbuildings.html



Collections

We continued to make biographies more accessible and browsable by creating a unique Biography section, organized by the subject's last name.

We created 3 pull-out collections from Adult Non-Fiction:

- Consumer Health authoritative and up-to-date materials on important health topics
- Career Center authoritative and up-to-date job & career materials
- Graphic Novels all graphic novels and comic books will have their own section outside of Adult Non-fic, on the shelves behind the new books toward the Broad St Entrance

Given our ability to provide music through our participation in our consortium-managed hoopla account, we deaccessioned our CD music collection. Looking for music? Check out hoopla with your Library card!

Materials for teens were consolidated in the 3rd floor Teen Department. Initially only fiction, including the manga collection, were shelved on the 3rd floor, but with the growing popularity of this teen space, Tracy Robinson, Head of Teen Services, began allocating space for nonfiction works.

In February 2018 we began circulating all DVDs for free, without a weekly rental fee.

STAFFING

Jose Ruiz-Alvarez resigned from his position as head of Information services to relocate to San Antonio, Texas

Ally Blumenfeld took over as Head of Information and Adult Services in September 2017

Other new staff included Library Assistants Kit Ling Yam-Chan, Lois Javier, Marc Anthony Moron, Christina Topoloski, Alihanisha Piza and Christian Medina, and Office Assistant Sheriea Johnson.

Our cleaning crew was moved in-house in February, and now includes full-timer Ana Maria Sanchez and part-timers Maria Ruby Ramirez and Carmen Losada.

Tracy Robinson completed her Master's Degree in Library Studies and was promoted to Head of Teen Services.

Other promotions include Carolyn Rapisaldo from Senior Library Assistant to Principal Library Assistant; Yvette Cooper and Sheila O'Brien from Library Assistant to Senior Library Assistant.

In January we began issuing staff photo ID cards. Look for them to identify our staff!

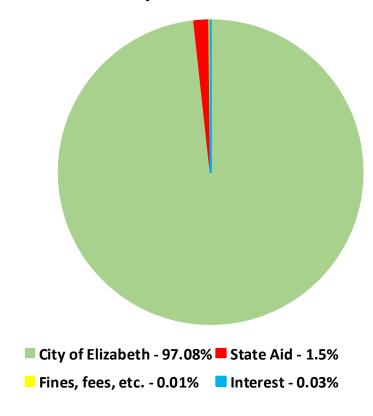
Grants

State, county and local grants subsidize our generous funding from the City of Elizabeth. In FY 2017-2018, we received the following:

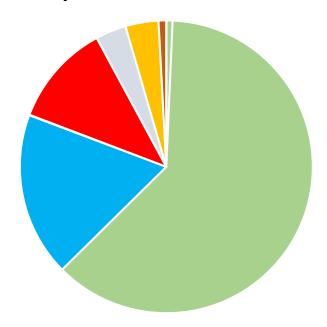
- An award of \$93,980 from the State Department of Labor and Workforce Development for literacy initiatives. In addition to providing tutoring for the GED/HSE and English literacy skills, the grant allowed us to upgrade the tables and chairs in our larger classroom.
- A NNLM/MAR Health Information Awareness Grant of \$5,000 brought us resources for our "Pop-Up Library," and makes us eligible for follow-up funds of \$10,000.
- \$7,500 received through the Union County Freeholders
 Children's Grant allowed us to, once again, expand our
 summer programming, and create our 1000 Books Before
 Kindergarten program.
- An NJ Makers Day Mini-Grant brought us \$500 worth of music recording equipment, as well as some musical instruments.
- Another \$500 grant brought us two portable sewing machines and a Robotics Obstacle Course for NJ Makers Day.
- With an award of \$750 by the NJ State Library and the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University, EPL became one of ten NJ public libraries hosting the Math and Science Story Time (MASST) Series for preschoolers.
- Project Grant of \$8,000 from NJ Historical Commission for continued digitization of the Elizabeth Daily Journal.

Budget Matters

Library Income 2017-2018



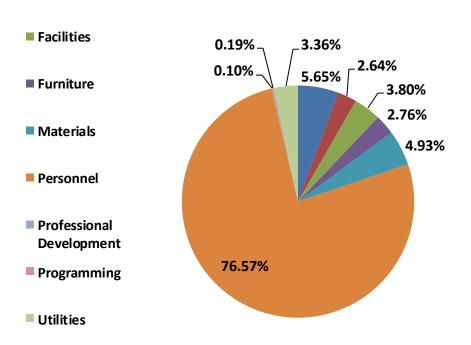
Library Personnel Costs 2017-2018

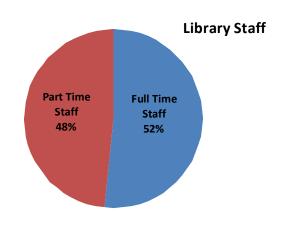


- Dental Insurance 0.69% Gross Salaries 61.91% Health Benefits 18.13%
- Vision Care 0.05% Pension 11.33% Prescriptions 3.39%
- Social Security 3.64% Medicare 0.85 Civil Service 0.00%

Library Expenditure 2016 -2017

■ Technology





Total Library Budget Year to Year

