

2025 Annual Report

*Celebrating
150 Years*

PPL150



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS...

A Legacy of Community Service, Innovation and Impact

2025 was a historic year for Providence Public Library (PPL) as we proudly marked our 150th anniversary – an extraordinary milestone in our life as an institution that has served as a cornerstone of knowledge, creativity, and community engagement for generations of Rhode Islanders. Founded in 1875, PPL has evolved over time into a dynamic organization that has continuously responded to our community’s needs through innovative programs, an unwavering commitment to education, and an open invitation to everyone to learn, explore, and grow.

As we celebrated, we reflected on PPL’s incredible journey and transformative impact on Providence and beyond. From our humble beginnings when we first opened our doors in 1878, the Library has expanded its role in Rhode Islanders’ lives, serving as a vital public resource for learning, culture, and connection. Our mission has remained constant — providing free, equitable access to information and enriching the lives of our diverse community members.

From our origins in 1871 – when a coalition of like-minded individuals and organizations came together to establish a “free library, art gallery, and museum” – to today, PPL has enjoyed an enduring partnership with the people of our state. This spirit of collaboration has been central to our success, from our early days of establishing “relationships” with individuals and community groups to ongoing partnerships with schools, other non-profits, and local businesses.

Throughout our history, PPL has developed pioneering services to meet the needs of the time. Whether being among the first libraries in the country to establish an Information Desk and issue library cards to children, to building a citywide branch system and introducing book-mobile services, to leading the effort to launch Rhode Island’s statewide library catalog system, PPL has embraced its role at the forefront pursuing advances in our mission to serve our community’s information and learning needs.

Today, we continue to focus on providing essential educational services, workforce development opportunities, and impactful learning programs, particularly for underserved communities. Our Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI), which began in the 1980s, is a testament to PPL’s dedication to ensuring that everyone, from young children to adults, has the opportunity to learn and grow. Along with countless others, it endures as an example of the kind of programs for which PPL received the Institute for Museum & Library Services’ 2001 National Award for Library Service, a recognition of our commitment to reaching beyond the expected to serve our community in extraordinary ways.

More recently in 2015, embracing technology to reach more people, we launched Provlidigital.org, now featuring 20,000 digitized items from our Special Collections and ensuring that our historical and cultural treasures are accessible to all. And in 2020, we completed our historic “Think Again” renovation, a \$28 million transformation that reimaged our building as a 21st-century hub for learning, collaboration, and community connection.

Looking Ahead: A Vision for the Next 150 Years

As we look to the next 150 years, we are committed to ensuring that PPL remains at the heart of the community, adapting to the changing needs of our residents, and providing access to the tools and resources that foster lifelong learning. With the continued support of our donors, partners, and patrons, we know that PPL will endure as a vital place where curiosity thrives, creativity is nurtured, and where everyone can come to learn and grow.

We couldn’t have made it to this point without the incredible support of our community – those who’ve given their time, resources, and passion to help PPL become what it is today. As we celebrate this momentous occasion, we renew our commitment to serving the people of Providence and all of Rhode Island for the next 150 years and beyond.

Thank you for being part of our story; we look forward to continuing this journey with you.

Jack Martin, *PPL Executive Director*
Christopher Stevens, *Chair*



Rhode Coder’s Showcase Day

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS...

Financial Report

July 1, 2024 — June 30, 2025

Fiscal Year 2025 — July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025
Consolidated report of the PPL and PPL Foundation
unaudited

REVENUE — \$8,943,990

Private Support

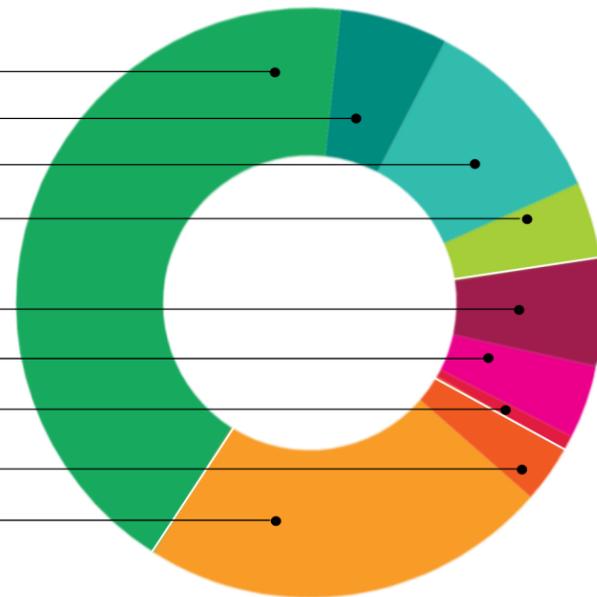
Endowment	\$3,822,079
Individuals/Family Foundations	\$531,701
Corporations/Private Funding	\$960,111
Earned Income	\$373,492

Public Support

State of Rhode Island - Grant in Aid	\$529,518
Rhode Island SRRC	\$360,460
City of Providence Building Lease	\$74,952

Contracts/Agreements

State/Federal/Municipal Contracts	\$2,012,265
City of Providence Building Lease	\$279,412



EXPENSES — \$8,828,660

Personnel	\$4,612,748
Debt Service	\$2,025,274
Program Support	\$851,919
Facilities	\$748,457
Books and Library Materials	\$403,920
Professional Fees	\$186,343



PPL Marks 150 Years with a Year-long Celebration

Celebrating its rich history and tradition of community service, the Library kicked off a year-long observance early in the year with the launch of an **online 150 Anniversary tribute** followed by a 150th birthday party on April 12. PPL’s official birthday (April 7, 1875) coincidentally fell within 2025 National Library Week – the annual celebration of the valuable role libraries, librarians, and library workers play in transforming lives and strengthening our communities. Hundreds joined the Library for a day of fun, participating in maker activities in PPL’s Workshop, special family storytimes, library-wide scavenger hunt, giveaways, and more. Many who attended chose to join the ranks of **PPL Alum**, adding theirs to the Library’s “love stories.”

“PPL has a rich history and tradition of extraordinary service in Providence and for all Rhode Islanders, really,” said Jack Martin, PPL Executive Director. “During our celebrations this year we’re highlighting PPL’s vital role in and commitment to our community over the decades, specifically the Library’s mission and dedication to meeting the needs of the day – whatever they may be – through the development of innovative services and programs. This has been a defining element of PPL’s rich history.”

Next, the Library held an extra-special 10th annual *Savor the Story* Gala in May, commemorating PPL’s enduring role at the heart of our community.



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS...

2025 At-a-Glance

Total usage of resources and materials topped **1,792,607**, including use of AskRI offerings, while library users received information assistance from library staff a total of **56,095** times.

PPL had more than **121,000** in-person visitors and **178,872** website visits.

2,307 individuals received Digital Equity Services and formal Technology & Career Training, including basic skills classes, in-person information and virtual learning sessions in both English and Spanish. Meanwhile, **86** learners progressed through one or more levels of the rigorous MS Excel Pathways program.

RIFLI served **390** ESL students and **130** Citizenship students from **50+** countries.

PPL's RI Adult Education Professional Development team held **66** synchronous training sessions attended by **650** participants across **19** organizations. Also, **36** new recorded training sessions were uploaded to the new RI Adult Education Professional Learning Pathways YouTube Channel for a total of **81** updated videos.

652 youth and adults participated in Workshop Open Studio and Training sessions, including **232** youth who participated in STEAM opportunities.

The Library's *Young Creators* program engaged **146** 6 - 12 years old in **20** sessions focused on comic book drawing, music, theater, creative writing, and sewing.

5,112 children and parents visited the Children's Library while **1,487** attended **237** story times; and Teen Loft youth services staff welcomed **4,451** teens.

PPL's Special Collections department hosted more than **800** researchers and students, event attendees, and tour visitors.

More than **21,186** children, youth, and adults attended a multitude of PPL learning and enrichment programs, exhibitions, and events.

Through a new partnership, **700** individuals received information about RI Energy's Residential Energy Efficiency Landlord and Renter Incentive Program at community meetings and events, while **183** RI landlords participated in informational sessions offered in both English and Spanish.

PPL submitted another **49,000** pages of Rhode Island newspapers to the *Chronicling America national archive website through the Library of Congress' National Digital Newspaper Program*.

Pied Type Headlines Busy Year for Exhibitions at PPL

Artist and letterpress printer Lois Harada brought her exhibition *Pied Type: Letterpress Printing in Providence, 1762 - Today* – highlighting the robust history of commercial printing in Rhode Island – to PPL's Joan T. Boghossian Gallery in October. In a print shop, pied type refers to jumbled or unsorted letters – usually created by accidentally dropping or spilling metal type. The exhibition revealed the various roles of craftspeople in the letterpress printing process and delved into the techniques and equipment still used by contemporary printers in Providence today.



Pied Type featured materials from PPL's Updike Collection, the Tomaquag Museum, Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, and Rhode Island Historical Society, as well as works from AS220, DWRI Letterpress, and artist Jacques Bidon.

In November, in conjunction with the exhibition, Harada organized a panel discussion with fellow Rhode Island printmakers Andre Lee Bassuet, Jacques Bidon, and Dan Wood. Moderated by Jordan Goffin, Director of Special Collections, each printer shared spoke about their practice and journeys in print and why the letterpress medium is important to their work.

In January, Harada and PPL's Director of Special Collections, Jordan Goffin, held a one-day pop-up of PPL's Updike Print shop where members of the public were invited to an interactive workshop to try their hand on printing presses using moveable type. Participants were guided through printmaking techniques and fashioning one-of-a-kind postcards.

Pied Type: Letterpress Printing in Providence, 1762-Today was made possible in part through funding support from Rhode Island Humanities, an independent state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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LIBRARY DIRECTOR



The complete 2025 Annual Report can be viewed
online at: prov.pub/2025annualreport. For best viewing
experience, please open on a desktop browser.



Providence Public Library

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