

State of the Library Report for Year 2024

The Rockville Centre Public Library plays a prominent role in the quality of life and growth of the community. It remains committed to providing relevant services, anticipating patrons' future expectations with provisions for a changing environment.

The Board continued its practice of sound fiscal and operational policies and procedures. It is committed to offering excellent library services in a cost-effective manner. The Board is mindful of maintaining the budget below the state-mandated tax cap.

The positive feedback from recent patron surveys and patron correspondence confirmed that the Library is a valued asset for Rockville Centre. The Library is important to many of its residents and local neighbors.

A study of the *Year in Review* demonstrates the Library's success in fulfilling its mission to the community, delivering quality services in a welcoming building.

Some of the highlights of 2024:

- Refurbished the Main Floor Reading Room
- Increased the number of study rooms
- Added technology resources to group study rooms
- Increased seating and study space on main floor
- Expanded programming for all ages
- Expanded technical assistance programs
- Expanded the *Library of Things* collection
- Created a new meeting room (soon to be completed)
- Added Kanopy streaming services
- Started a Seed Library

State of the Library

- **Year in Review**
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- **Technology**
- **Programming**
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STATE OF THE LIBRARY

2024 Year in Review

People & Programs:	148,038	Patron visits
	13,573	Total cardholders (includes new cardholders)
	926	New cardholders
	431	New Overdrive users
	251	New Hoopla and Kanopy users
	212	Bestsellers Club members
	61	Library-to-Your-Door participants
	3,309	Patrons utilized individual & group study rooms
	3,079	Patrons attended community organization events
	1,425	Programs offered
	22,002	Program attendees including 6,273 children
	88	Patrons received free tax preparation & filing services
Circulation:	159,949	Print & media
	38,652	e-Books
	23,934	e-Audiobook
	8,490	e-Magazines
	1,455	Museum passes
	1,423	Streaming movies and television shows
Technology Usage:	184,606	Webpage views
	8,673	Public computer sessions
	45,260	WiFi sessions
Social Media:	25,400	Engagements

Facilities Management

The Library remained attentive to its program to maintain the physical plant in good repair, functional in its mission, aesthetically appealing and efficient in its use of resources. Both routine and unexpected facility matters were addressed in a timely and effective manner.

Having completed several capital improvements and repairs of the building's infrastructure in 2023, the year 2024 saw an emphasis placed on refurbishing the building's interior. A public survey was conducted to gather information about patrons' usage of the building's space. There were over 333 participants. One of the changes requested by the participants regarding their use of the building favored more space for reading and study and more community meeting rooms.

The Five-Year Facility Plan was updated to reflect the results of the 2023 survey regarding patron services and the 2024 patron survey regarding the building space. The Plan incorporated input from the office of John Grillo, Architect and the Facilities and Technology Committee and was approved by the Board.

Projects Completed:

- Refurbished the Main Reading Room including the adjoining study rooms and staff spaces incorporating the following improvements:
 - Painted with a fresh color palette
 - Installed new carpet
 - Replaced metal shelving behind the Adult Reference Desk with a credenza and bookshelves
 - Installed a wall-mounted monitor behind the Reference Desk to display Library news and programs
 - Replaced wooden chairs with those similar on the second floor (chairs donated to local non-profit organizations)
 - New signage
 - Replaced a glass display case with a colorful tree book display outside the Children's Room.
- Created two new study rooms: The Paging Room was relocated to the space behind the Circulation Desk. This allowed the room to be reconfigured into a group study room. In addition, an unused staff space was reconfigured into an individual study room. A smart TV and white board were installed in the group study room. Both rooms were freshly painted and furnished. Funding for this work was part of the \$10,000 Bullet Aid secured by Senator Kevin Thomas. The Library now has a total of six individual study rooms and three group study rooms. The patrons have expressed appreciation for these new spaces.
- Created more seating and open space in both Adult and Children's areas to meet the changing preferences of our patrons:
 - Combined magazines on their shelves to make space to accommodate a week's worth of newspapers. Moved the racks that stored older newspapers to the basement. Weeded the Adult fiction collection for material that had not circulated for years or was in poor condition. These actions enabled the Library to remove unneeded shelving. We moved three tables and 12 chairs from the Main Reading Room to this newly created space on the first floor. This action responds to patron requests for more quiet areas for individual and collaborative study. (Part of the Five-Year Plan)
 - Weeding non-fiction in the Children's Room for material that had not circulated or was outdated. This allowed for shifting the remaining collection and the removal of shelving to create a sense of openness and also provide space for stroller parking, a necessity in our walkable town!
- Reconfigured the display strategies on the second floor to enhance both visual appeal and improve line of sight for safety reasons.
- Finalized the digitization of the Library's Policy Manual. The target date for uploading the manual to the webpage for access by Board members and staff is by the end of January 2025.
- Completed several maintenance projects to improve either the comfort and safety of patrons or the infrastructure of the building:
 - Repaired a leak in the elevator pit with chemical grout injections.
 - Repaired several HVAC system components.
 - Replaced several sidewalk flags which had lifted.

- Installed new hand dryers in both the Men’s and Women’s restrooms (repeated patron request from the Building Survey).
- New York State Public Library Construction Grants
 - 2022–2023 project, *Elevator Reconstruction*: The Library received the final 10% of the funds which closed out the grant for the. The total award was \$98,470.
 - 2023–2024 project, *Installation of a keyless entry system to control access to interior and exterior doors*. Total funding is \$4,949. The Library received a payment of \$4,454, which is 90% of the funds; the remaining 10% should be received in 2025.
 - 2024–2025 project, *Interior reconstruction of a storage room into a meeting room*: NLS submitted its 2024 funding recommendations to SED. NLS placed our project in the category for 44.5% of cost reimbursement. The estimated cost of the construction at the time of submittal was \$117,775. The recommended reimbursement is \$52,494.
 - 2025–2026 proposed project, *Rear Entrance Vestibule Renovation*: Awaiting status update from SED. This work is included in the Five-Year Facilities Plan.

Upcoming Projects:

- Reconstruction of a storage room into a new meeting room: This work is close to completion and will be a welcome addition in light of a 25% increase in community room use this past year. The project is being funded by a combination of a patron bequest and a New York Public Library Construction Grant.
- Under consideration and pending Board approval: Refresh the play area in the Children’s Room with new comfortable seating for adults, one larger table for the children, replacing two small tables and new shelving in the Easy Reader corner, a popular spot.
- Landscape improvements: Although initiated in 2024, additional work is scheduled for the spring.

Management – Miscellaneous:

- Utica Insurance Group – As in the past, the Library qualified for a low-risk category due to a high level of building maintenance, security, and general housekeeping procedures. The Library received a \$4,279.20 dividend as a member of this safety group.

Budget / Operational Policies

- The Board presented a fiscally conservative 2024–2025 Budget with a 2.5% tax increase, remaining under the State tax cap. The estimated annual increase to the average homeowner was \$13 or \$1.08 a month. The budget passed with a wide margin. The budget is tracking well at the fiscal mid-year point.
- The Library, having followed proper accounting practices, received a clean audit and a positive report from its auditor for the Financial Statement for Year Ended June 30, 2024.
- The Library continued its bank diversification with accounts in TD Bank and Flagstar Bank.
- The Library’s first experience as a Nassau County Early Voting Polling place went smoothly. The Library received a \$2,500 payment, which was substantially more than the Library’s overtime costs.

Technology

Two major changes that affected both staff and patrons in 2024:

- The Nassau Library System rolled out a new catalog, Vega, in July. Staff had been training on the new catalog for months prior to its opening and provided assistance to patrons.
- In October, Plymouth Rocket, the vendor for our events calendar, room and museum pass reservation system unexpectedly closed the company. A majority of Nassau County Public Libraries including Rockville Centre were affected. After investigating several software companies, the Library selected LibCal for its new event calendar and room reservation system and MuseumKey for its new museum pass reservation system. These transitions were a demanding undertaking within a tight timeline to minimize inconvenience for patrons. Compliments are extended to the Rockville Centre staff and also to the collaborative staff of other libraries.

The Library continued to incorporate new technologies that enhance the patron experience.

New:

- Installed monitors in the group study rooms that allow users to wirelessly cast or mirror from their devices. Patrons may borrow an HDMI cord from the IT Office if they would like to connect their personal devices directly to the monitors. Clear, simple instruction sheets were posted in each room.
- Improvements in the small community room: Installed dimmers to provide lighting options during programs. Installed a 75” smart TV to provide staff, patrons and community organizations the ability to easily give presentations and stream media in this room.
- Installed a 55” monitor behind the Circulation Desk and a 75” monitor behind the Adult Reference Desk to showcase informational sliders on upcoming programs and library offerings.
- Conducted workshops for patrons on the use of Kanopy and Hoopla, two databases for streaming movies and TV shows, and Libby, a database for digital books, audiobooks and magazines.
- Mounted a new electronic kiosk at the top of the staircase that leads to the meeting rooms. The kiosk lists the events of the day and their locations.

Examples of continuing programs:

- Provided individual in-person technical support services by the Library’s IT Specialist including Apple iOS and Android help sessions twice a month.
- Held gaming programs, computer classes, and community art receptions with displayed images in Kim’s Corner using the Smart Roku TV.
- Circulated preloaded Rokus, preloaded Kindles, Mobile hotspots, a Pocketalk Translator and other items for both adults and children in the Library of Things collection.
- Continued to use Skynet, an ADA website accessibility tool.
- Posted Rockville Centre Library events that are open to all Nassau County residents on the Nassau Libraries Calendar of Events.

- Provided patrons with an option for printing from their personal devices directly to the Library's copiers by using Princh, a mobile printing app.
- Offered expanded digital collections of eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and streaming services.
- Continued utilizing the Traf-Sys people counting system. This provides the Library with accurate information such as the date and time of patron activity. The Library can use this data to adjust staffing levels.

Programming

The Library has broadened its scope of Adult and Youth Services programming. It included additional STEM programs for youth and technology instruction for adults, as well as increased recreational programming for all. The majority of Adult programs are held in person. However, to meet patrons' preferences, some Adult programs maintain the option of three presentation formats: in person, virtual or hybrid. Youth Services programs are in person.

New Adult programming:

- Seed Library: We were pleased to offer a new seed library. It served 282 patrons and distributed 1,677 packets of vegetable, herb, and flower seeds.
- Discounted Tickets for Long Island Attractions: The Library expanded its selection of discounted tickets to include Adventureland, Adventure Park at Long Island, and Splish Splash Water Park. Discounted tickets to the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Riverhead Aquarium were also available.
- Kanopy: This streaming video platform offers films, TV shows, educational videos and documentaries.

Examples of **Adult** programs that were offered in 2024:

- Varied programs – Art, history, entertainment, current events, cultural and wellness lectures, game instruction (bridge, mahjong, canasta), afternoon and evening games, cooking and craft demonstrations, movies, technology instruction, five weekly exercise classes, craft instruction, writing instruction, concerts, author interviews and driving instruction.
- Readers' Advisory – Monthly book, short story and poetry discussion groups; a bi-monthly non-fiction discussion group; themed print and digital reading lists; tabletop displays; Bestsellers Club; homebound services.
- Monthly national awareness displays (examples – Military Appreciation, Hispanic Heritage, Cancer Prevention)
- Professional hands-on instruction in applications such as Excel, Microsoft Word and Google Suite.
- Adult Summer Reading Challenge – 97 participants enjoyed the program. Generous local merchants donated prizes for the participants.
- Archival services – Local history queries researched.
- Museum and garden memberships – Nineteen memberships are available through the Library's collection.

- Food, clothing, toy drives – Collections for local organizations, sponsored as a Library program or by legislators.
- Library-wide celebrations:
 - National Library Week (April 7-13) – Ready – Set – Library – Discover the Possibilities
 - Library Card Sign-up Month (September – 69 new patrons signed up)
- Paper shredding event – Annual event.
- Interloaned a travelling exhibit from Long Island Library Resource Council, *Two Hundred Years of the Erie Canal*.
- Tax preparation services from Town of Hempstead’s VITA program served 83 patrons.

New Youth Services Programming:

- Video Game Meet-up on Friday afternoons: Five kids attended the first session, which is great for a young adult program. We plan to continue this informal teen program.
- November Super Smash Tournament: Held the tournament on Election Day; schools were closed and there was a good turnout of participants.
- Checkmate Chess Club: Popular program moderated by a local teacher that was started in the summer and continued into the fall.
- Lil’ Athletes: A new presenter focused on soccer and baseball for preschoolers; held on Saturdays.
- South Side Middle School Summer Reading List: The staff created a video of the suggested summer reading list. The video was posted on the school website and on the Library’s Teen Summer Reading Page.

Examples of **Youth Services** activities and programming in 2024:

- Varied programs – Storytimes including sensory, free play times, cook and share, craft programs in person and take home kits, art therapy, music and movement programs, movies, book discussions, yoga classes, Reading to Dogs, book buddies, story time chess.
- Library Babies – A program specifically for our youngest patrons – birth to pre-walkers.
- Clubs – Lego, coding, video gaming, Young Engineers and chess.
- Brag tags – Continue to be popular as prizes for programs.
- Dance party – Popular program with colorful lights, a disco ball, balloons, coloring sheets and a curated dance playlist.
- Library of Things - American Girl dolls, backpack kits, Launchpads, Wonderbooks, Tonieboxes, and much more.
- Chick incubation program (While the eggs were incubating, we held a raffle for a pair of crocheted chickens handmade by the staff).
- Saturday Smash Tournaments (April) – 25 kids had fun competing for prizes and eating pizza.
- Passive Programming – Expanded polling programs for fun voting.
- Winter Reading program: Kicked off with a hot cocoa party. Participates picked up 151 reading records.
- Summer reading program: 420 registered; 120 programs were attended by 2601 children, teens and adults
- Library Trick or Treat – Fourth annual Halloween event with 105 children, 88 adults and

14 teen volunteers.

- Read-a-Thon – Raise funds for the Friends of the Library.
- Noon Year’s Eve (12/30): Fourth annual event with 38 kids, 35 adults and five teen volunteers
- Family Place collection – Provides information and support to young families regarding the social and emotional development of young children.
- Mothers’ Center Circle – A support group to discuss parenting and family issues.
- RVC Heroes Day – The ninth annual tribute to our first responders and residents lost on 9/11 was attended by hundreds of children, adults and local dignitaries.
- RVC District schools
 - Collaborated on reading lists and curriculum support
 - School and class visits including RVC pre-K classes, nursery schools and back to school nights
 - School of the month artwork displays – decorated the Children’s Room
 - St. Agnes Community Reader’s Day
 - Reading to students – PTA sponsored Pick a Reading Partner (PARP)
 - Wellness Fair & Walk at South Side Middle School

Just for Teens:

- Teen café – Teens relax with snacks, crafts and games.
- Stress Busting Kits – Help teens relieve stress during test season (30 teens took a kit).
- Community service opportunities – Variety of programs and times. Examples are Seed Library helpers by packaging seeds for the Seed Library, getting the summer reading records ready for the program start, chess club and making cards for the organization, *Cards for Hospitalized Kids*.

Outreach/Community Partnerships

All staff members participated in community outreach whether in the Library or out in the community.

- New York Blood Center – Hosted a blood drive in the Library.
- St. Francis Hospital and Health Center Outreach Bus – Provided free health screenings and flu shots, extending vital services to our community.
- RVC School District Art Exhibit – For the month of May, the Library hosted the second School District’s Art Show with a reception on May 6. Artwork from students in grades K through 12 was displayed throughout the Library. Over 200 people enjoyed the exhibit.
- 2024 Nassau Library System Mass Mailer – Participated in the second annual mailing to non-patron households informing the residents of the resources and services libraries have to offer.
- South Side High School School-to-Work Vocational Program – Two to three vocational students with their aides regularly visited the Library and compiled “welcome bags” for new patrons and also deaccessioned weeded books.
- RVC Schools Curriculum and Instruction Department – Library attended as a community partner in a consultation and collaboration meeting to discuss ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) legislation.

- Community Artists – Artists displayed their work in the community rooms, the lower lobby and the second floor cabinet.
- Solar Eclipse Glasses – Distributed solar eclipse glasses to patrons while supply lasted.
- Senior Health Expo – Participated in the annual event held at the RVC Recreation Center.
- Library-to-Your-Door – This personalized reader’s advisory service continued to be much-appreciated by its participants and is often recognized by the participants’ family.
- Maple Point Assisted Living Center Book Discussion – Interloaned and delivered large-type books along with book discussion questions for their leader.
- Sandel Center – Interloaned books for their long-standing book discussion group.
- RVC LIRR Commuter Collection – Maintained a book cart for commuters’ enjoyment.
- Local legislators – Hosted food (for people and pets), school supplies and toy drives; provided space to meet constituents and hold tax reassessment and Narcan training programs. Participated in legislator’s off-site Island Harvest food drive to benefit Sharon’s Pantry at the MLK Center.
- Food drives – Held Library food drives including *Food for Fines* for Sharon’s Pantry.
- 2025 Best of Long Island competition – Nominated for the eighth time and recognized for our imaginative and clever posts.
- Lions Club – Hosted a collection site for discarded eyeglasses.
- The Philips House Museum – Cooperative sharing of archives.
- Clothing Drive – Held a clothing drive in December for mittens/hats/gloves for the Mary Brennan Inn.
- Bethany House – Held a paper goods drive in support of the House.
- The Great Give Back, a joint Nassau and Suffolk Counties program – In the spirit of National Diaper Need Awareness Week, collected donated diapers in all sizes for the Mary Brennan Inn.
- Chamber of Commerce Member – Participated in the annual Snowman Hunt.

Grants/Donations – Community and Legislative

In addition to the New York State Public Library Construction Grants listed under Facilities Management, the Library received the following funding:

- Senator Kevin Thomas and Assemblyman Brian Curran secured legislative funding in 2024’s State Budget. The respective \$10,000 and \$7,500 in aid will be used towards refurbishing the Helen Kraus Room, the Library’s largest and busiest community room. The proposed improvements under consideration are replacing the carpet flooring, installing new acoustic wall treatments, and upgrading the audiovisual system. Prior to this work, the HVAC system that serves the room will be replaced to better control the temperature (part of the Five-Year Plan).
- CREST Award (Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability and Technology Program): Through the efforts of Senator Kevin Thomas, the Library was selected to receive a grant award in the amount of \$75,000. These funds will be combined with the above mentioned legislative aid to refurbish the Helen Kraus Community Room. We completed the preliminary application and are soliciting quotes for the work.
- Rockville Centre Library Friends continued to supplement the Library’s budget by supporting programs for all ages; their donations totaled \$14,084.

- Joseph Price of EPIC Insurance continued his annual donation of \$500 for the Library's Family Place Center.
- NLS distributed funds from New York State's "Love Your Library Fund" to member libraries. Rockville Centre received \$100 to support the Youth Services summer reading program.
- E-rate for FY 2023–2024: \$3,517.08. This funding is part of a Federal Communications Commission program that makes telecommunication and information services more affordable for schools and libraries.
- Local Library Services Aid (LLSA) for FY 2024–2025: \$6,867 (90% payment). This funding is system aid for member libraries provided by the New York State Library.
- E-commerce Reimbursement for 2nd Quarter 2024: \$207.12 This self-service payment system allows patrons to pay for their fines using a credit card.