

# STRONGER LIBRARY --- STRONGER LOUISVILLE

## ADVOCACY PLATFORM 2022



### 2023 PUBLIC FUNDING PRIORITIES

**1. \$290,000  
EQUITABLE ACCESS**

**2. \$1,000,000  
TO INVEST IN BOOKS AND MATERIALS**

Louisville is making great strides to be a city of resilience and compassion, but there is still work to do. As a community, we continue to battle the sources of systemic inequity. We continue to address significant barriers in access to essential internet and digital connections, educational opportunities, workforce development programs, and safe spaces.

At this critical moment, we cannot afford to continue deeply underfunding the one public institution addressing every one of these challenges. Now is the time to increase investment in the **Louisville Free Public Library**.

Almost every Louisville citizen is within five miles of the free inclusive programs and services offered at their neighborhood library. They are close to free WiFi, books and online resources, meeting spaces, children's programs, job resources, research assistance, and so much more – services that are all delivered by passionate, degreed professionals every single day.

The Louisville Free Public Library system needs increased financial support to effectively scale its efforts and respond to the evolving community. Our library is funded at less than **two-thirds the national average** for cities our size, severely impacting the system's ability to expand services and fully address community challenges. LFPL needs increased annual investment of at least **\$10 million in operating dollars** to appropriately staff, stock, and maintain each library. \$1,290,000 in FY23 is the first step.

**With increased funding, the Louisville Free Public Library is poised to empower every Louisvillian to reach their potential. It's the equitable answer. It's the efficient answer. It's the right answer for Louisville.**

## EQUITABLE ACCESS: \$290,000

### THE CASE:

To use many essential resources provided by the library - for example, the digital access provided by public computers - citizens must physically enter branches. Several libraries within the LFPL system do not maintain hours as extensive as others. To do so requires additional staff to operate the facilities. Louisville Metro must provide the funding to support equitable access at every LFPL location, expanding hours at Portland, Western, and Fairdale to be equivalent to hours at other locations.

### THE EVIDENCE:

- African American, Hispanic, and Native youth are much more likely than white youth to use public libraries for internet access, and are much more likely to rely exclusively on the library for such access. Library closures, limited hours, and diminished services disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. Libraries in low-income communities should be open the same number of hours as other branches, providing equal access to resources and services. They serve as a lifeline of information to their local citizens.
- Compared to peer cities such as Lexington and Indianapolis, Louisville has fewer Librarians to serve our population. Of the 16 cities compared, Louisville ranked 15th for the ratio of Librarians to patrons, with only one full-time Librarian available for every 10,137 citizens. This ratio is nearly three times higher than the top three peer cities.

“We have patrons begging us to open our doors. When the Western Library is closed, it means our neighbors don’t have printers or fax machines. They don’t have a quiet space to meet or study.”

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**Natalie**  
**Branch Manager**  
**WESTERN LIBRARY**



## INVEST IN BOOKS AND MATERIALS: \$1,000,000

### THE CASE:

The Louisville Free Public Library is the first and often only information access option for many in our community. A student needing a book for class, a nonprofit leader researching a grant proposal, a homebound patron reading the latest best-seller – all depend on library resources to meet their needs. As such, we must ensure that Louisville’s public library system can offer resources that meet the demands of our diverse community. With additional investment in collections, LFPL can offer a more current, balanced, and relevant collection that supports all our residents.

### THE EVIDENCE:

- Wait times for items at LFPL can at times range from 6 to 15 weeks. The Library can purchase more copies of high-demand items with additional funds, reducing wait times.
- In comparison to peer cities, Louisville’s collection size is one of the smallest in relation to the population of the 16 cities. Louisville ranked 14th – near the bottom – in its collection size to population ratio, with just 1.87 items per person. Our highest peer city maintains a ratio as high as 12.95 items per person.
- According to a report from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), increased investment in libraries, including collections, leads to increased use of libraries.

“I was looking for books for my daughter. The first five selections I made were not available for weeks. It was really disappointing. Luckily a librarian was able to help me pick something out while we were on the waiting list.”

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**Lisa**  
**LFPL PATRON**



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Community patronage helps libraries and citizens by encouraging engagement with library services, sharing information and resources, and helping secure much-needed funding. To assist, you can:

### **PARTICIPATE**

Visit a library, use services, and share with your friends and family all LFPL has to offer.

### **ADVOCATE**

Advocate to your Louisville Metro Councilperson and tell them why public libraries matter to you and our community. Ask them to support this year's public funding priorities.

### **DONATE**

Donate to the Library Foundation to support library programs, materials and more.

Visit [www.LFPLFoundation.org](http://www.LFPLFoundation.org) to sign up for our newsletter and get advocacy updates straight to your inbox.



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