

TO: Josephine Community Library District Board of Directors
FROM: Kate Lasky, Library Director
DATE: August 16, 2023
SUBJECT: FY 2022-23 Annual Report

In Josephine County, residents are served by Josephine Community Library District, formed in May 2017 as a special library district as defined by ORS 357. FY2022-23 reflects the fifth full year of operations as a library district and continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following annual report presents a comprehensive overview of the library district's achievements, resources, and impact on the community during the past fiscal year. Delving into the institution's diverse programs, patron engagement, and operational efficiency, this analysis aims to illuminate the vital role played by the library as a valuable knowledge hub and community asset.

CORE SERVICES

The core services of the library define the fundamental constant in the library's work, laying the foundation for strategic planning, materials and program development, and services for all ages.

- **Collection.** Maintain and circulate a curated and balanced collection of catalogued books and other materials selected for a wide range of interests for adults, youth, and children in the community.
- **Facilities.** Provide a pleasant experience and convenient space for library users, with trained volunteers and professional staff available for guidance in the acquisition of information.
- **Technology.** Provide access to the Internet and a variety of digital media with subsequent digital skills training.
- **Early Literacy.** Provide special programming to encourage children's literacy.
- **Lifelong Learning.** Provide adult programs that encourage lifelong learning.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The library's strategic plan is the overarching document developed by the Board of Directors that guides daily operations, including mission, vision, values, goals, projects, and key performance indicators. In FY23, the library fulfilled its third year of the 2021- 2024 Strategic Plan and finalized plans for a new strategic direction for the 2024-2027.

The 2021-2024 Strategic Direction builds on the core services with a focus on basic needs, diverse perspectives, civic engagement, and library systems as described in the summary

statements below and to achieve the vision of a community where ideas and people come together to share knowledge, experiences, and perspectives. These focuses represent the goals of the library system from 2021 to 2024 during the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most challenging times in recent history:

1. Residents fulfill basic needs and gain life skills through library services, library partner services, and referrals to community resources.
2. Residents of diverse backgrounds have their information needs addressed equitably, their perspectives welcomed, and their group represented at the library.
3. Residents have the information and learning opportunities they need to participate in local, state, and national issues and decision-making.
4. Residents benefit from a well-managed library that employs efficient operating systems and structures.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The library makes materials available in a variety of formats in an effort to provide access to information resources for all community members, such as print, audio, and digital materials including books and magazines, audio books, electronic books, research and subscription databases, and web resources based on community information needs.

In FY22-23, overall usage of library materials and participation in programs increased as the library continued to rebuild and repair services to meet pre-pandemic statistics and new demands for access to technology in Josephine County.

Number of Items Borrowed

Branch	Number of items borrowed (does not include ebooks)					
	Pre-COVID		Post-COVID			
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Grants Pass	199,509	210,921	199,329	68,284	152,080	197,242
Illinois Valley	36,862	38,520	32,891	26,804	27,087	31,487
Williams	11,350	10,470	8,337	3,708	8,365	10,527
Wolf Creek	7,522	8,258	6,236	7,099	6,843	8,019
Total	251,768	268,169	246,793	105,895	194,372	247,275

* COVID-19 facilities restrictions began March 2020

* FY21 facilities restricted 11 months with full access reinstated June 2021

* FY22 facilities restricted 6 months with full access reinstated January 2022

Figure 1: Monthly and annual circulation of materials increased by 21%.

Data does not include ebook borrowing.

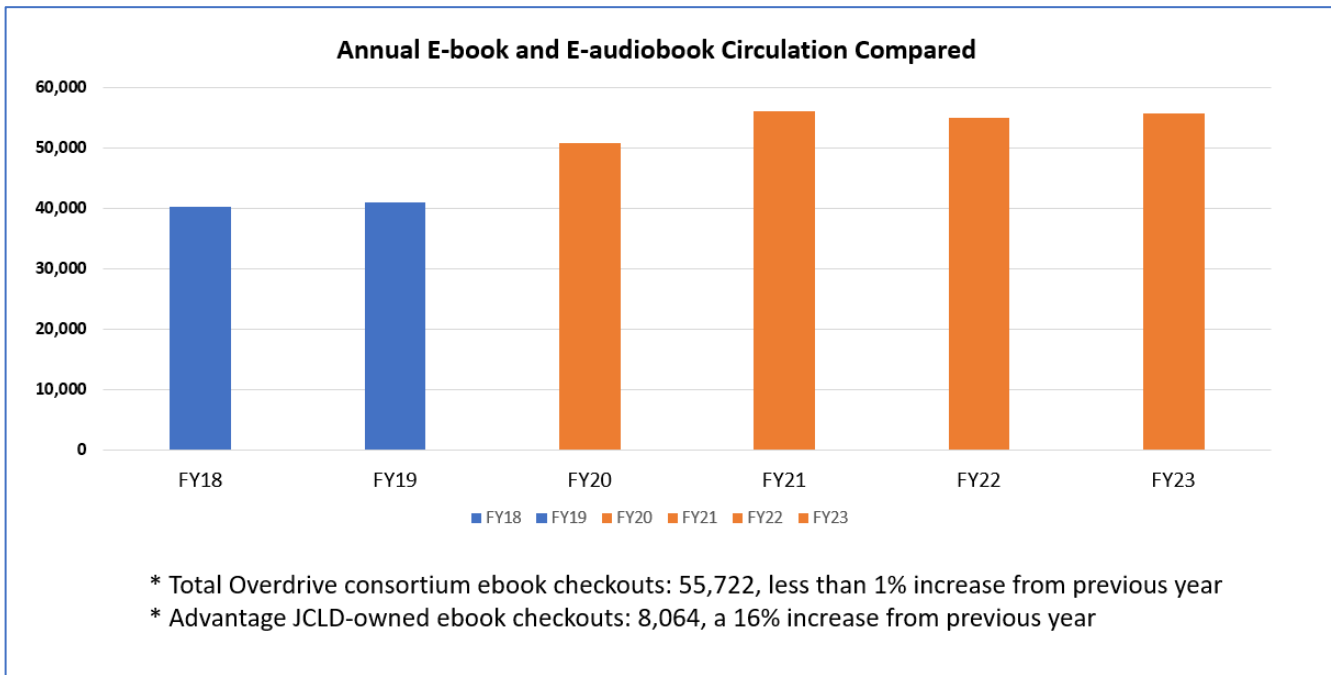


Figure 2: In FY22-23, the district circulated 55,772 ebooks, representing a 1% increase in lending.

	Pre-COVID	Post-COVID				
	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	
New library cards	2,953	2,487	1,282	*2,353	*3,179	
Materials added	13,469	8,436	8,875	6,824	9,087	
Computer use	12,889	11,010	328	4,310	8,387	
WiFi use	66,911	73,430	51,914	**29,831	31,329	

* Of new library card registrations, 572 were online electronic cards in FY22 and 395 in FY23
 **FY22 WiFi usage counts averaged for six months due to IT issues

Figure 3: Year-over-year comparisons of new library card registrations, materials added, and computer use demonstrates a steady recovery from the impact of pandemic restrictions.

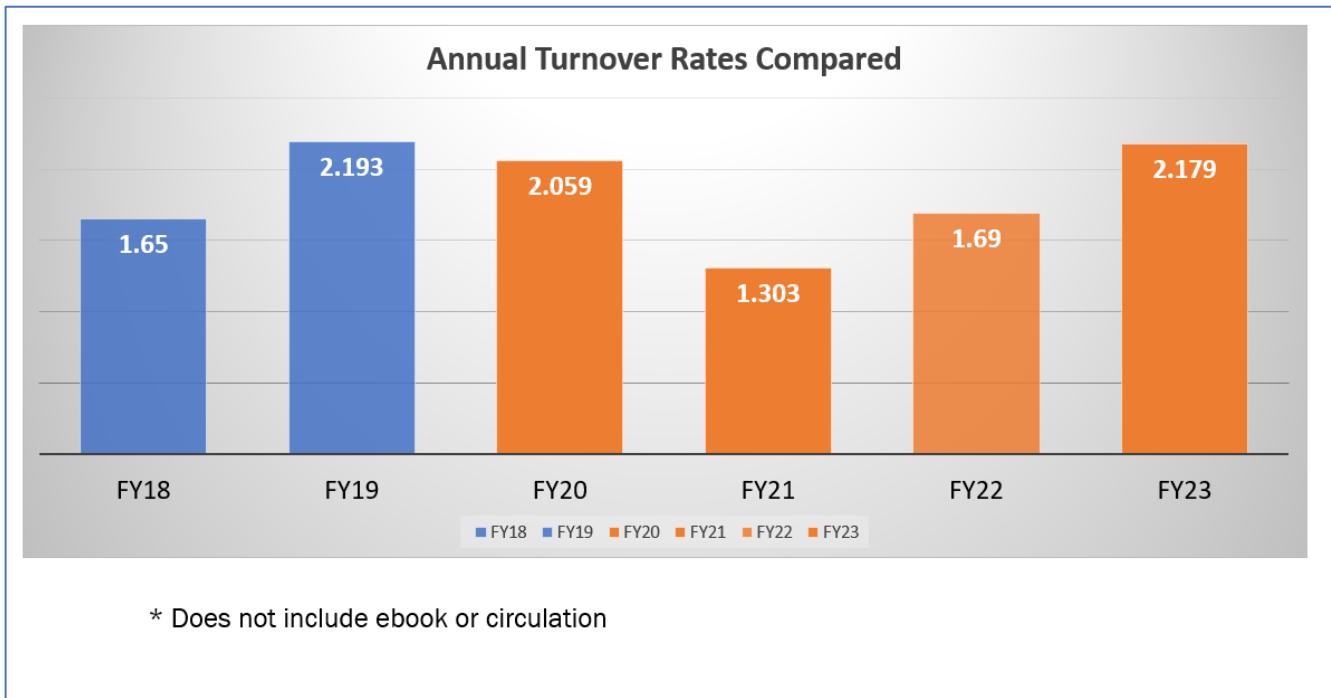


Figure 4: Turnover rates represent how frequently a single item is checked out, demonstrating the quality of materials. FY22-23 turnover rates increased to near pre-pandemic values.

In FY22-23, usage of digital resources continued to decline. FY23-24, it is projected that two additional databases will be discontinued, CreativeBug and State Library LearningExpress. The online Summer Reading Program registration portal known as BeanStack was also discontinued and a new internally developed registration tool funded by the library foundation replaced this service in June 2023, retaining online access to this critical reading program for families and individuals during summer months.

	FY21	FY22	FY23	Cost	Renewal date
Online catalog logins	45,357	39,201	41,099	part of ILS (iii, Polaris)	n/a
Gale searches	1,756	1,890	2,781	State Library sponsored	n/a
LearningExpress sessions	50	48	60	State Library sponsored	Expires 11/23
Novelist (clicks)	4,144	5,093	4,434	\$2,832 per year, increased 14%	Expires 12/23
Mango sessions	136	443	327	\$3,307 per year \$9,095 3-year contract	Expired 3/23 Renewed 3/26
CreativeBug users	110	109	116	\$3,000, 3-year contract	Expires 12/23
Brainfuse: JobNow	286	128	334	\$15,600, 3-year contract	Expires 12/23
Brainfuse: VetNow	41	22	19	(grant funded)	
Brainfuse: HelpNow	783	421	334		

Figure 5: Annual database usage compared.

Early literacy and lifelong learning

In FY23, the library offered a substantial increase in weekly and monthly early literacy and lifelong learning programs. From bilingual storytimes to creative writing workshops, library programs and services recovered from two years of facilities restrictions. Total adult programs, both virtual and in person, equaled 87 with 1,258 participants, representing a 40 percent increase from the prior year. Youth programs totaled 117 programs with 7,285 participants recorded, not including the 2023 Summer Reading Program. Some more popular programs included K9 Reading Buddies, Teen and Tween Book Boxes, Kindergarten Toolbox, Everyday Civics, and creative writing workshops.

The library offers an annual Summer Reading Program for all ages as its signature program. Summer reading programs are vital as they prevent learning loss, foster a love for reading, enhance literacy skills, and encourage lifelong learning habits among students and adults. Approximately 813 participants registered for 2023 Summer Reading Program and participants recorded 331,000 minutes of reading through a new, customized online engagement tool sponsored by the library foundation. These statistics exceed last year's benchmarks by 20-25 percent. As part of the Summer Reading Program, 15 Storybook Walks were offered offsite at all four branch areas with more than 200 participants from partnering agencies. Several partnerships supported the program, including Grants Pass School District 7, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Josephine County Historical Society, Evergreen Federal Bank BearFest, Bugs-R-U's, Southern Oregon University Extension Services Food Hero program, YMCA, and more.

The library partnered with the Grants Pass Daily Courier in FY23 to deliver information about the Summer Reading Program to families across Josephine County. This partnership was sponsored by 10 local businesses, equaling \$10,000 for paid advertisements, featuring fun activities to keep kids reading over summer. Sponsors included Affordable Truck & RV, Cynthia Harelson – CPA, Evergreen Federal Bank, Hill Dentistry, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Jim Sigel Chevrolet of Grants Pass, Josephine Community Library Foundation, Robinson Orthodontics, and the State Library of Oregon.

To better serve Spanish speakers in Josephine County, the library partnered with Project Youth+, which works to prepare low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented youth to thrive in school, careers and life. Project Youth+ helped the library hire a high school senior part-time to support Spanish outreach as a library assistant, sponsored by The Ford Family Foundation. She works in the children's library assisting patrons, processes translation on the library website, and translates documents for all four branches. The library also offered a weekly English Language Learners program and a monthly Spanish-language parent support group (Noche en Comunidad) and developed a Spanish-language version of its Kindergarten Toolbox program.

Other early literacy and lifelong learning programming included the Library of Things lending useful tools and objects, Sprout a Reader, Baby's First Book in partnership with the local hospital, school visits, tax assistance, and more. These programs, along with others, promoted early literacy through interactive activities, fostering essential skills like reading, while also facilitating lifelong learning and community engagement.

Technology

Public library technology is crucial for equitable access to information. It bridges digital divides, offering free Internet and digital resources to all. Modern library technology fosters learning, creativity, and literacy, keeping communities informed and engaged, and empowering individuals for lifelong learning and participation in today's digital world. More importantly, while the library offers the technology, staff and volunteers provide technical support and one-on-one instruction in computer basics to bridge the digital divide and help patrons get the resources they need. The library continued to offer 50 high-speed Internet access computers at all four branches with a total of 8,387 logged users, a 48 percent increase over the previous year. Patrons also benefitted from 40 hotspots available for checkout and an additional 10 laptops with Microsoft Suite for in-home usage. In FY23, Wi-Fi access allowed patrons to log 31,329 unique sessions connecting to the Internet both inside and outside the facilities using personal devices.

The library is also a virtual space where individuals can gain access to information, resources, and all the rich experiences the library offers. In FY23, website usage declined in all areas except Spanish language resources, likely due to increased access to in-person library facilities and programs post-pandemic. While usage of print and physical material increased, online visitors, pages views, and sessions decreased, suggesting a causal relationship between the two types of access.

JCLD Website Engagement

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	Notable change
Visitors	30,551	32,144	43,876	35,761	-22%
Page views	87,750	160,256	167,095	118,978	-40%
Sessions	48,685	68,650	78,904	61,709	-27%
Spanish language	22	233	502	970	+93%
JosephineLINK	n/a	1,724	2,203	1,879	-17%

Figure 6: Annual website usage compared.

PARTNERSHIPS

The district partnered with local, state, and national nonprofit organizations to offer programs and services which strengthen the district's mission, increase community engagement, and support community initiatives that align with library core services of providing materials and programs, early literacy, technology, lifelong learning, and open facilities. FY23 service partners are listed in Figure 8. Library partners fall into three categories – service partners, funding partners, and associations. Service partners are organizations working with the library to provide

programs, workshops, storytimes, or other children’s and adult services for community members. Currently the district has 30 service partners.

In addition, library staff are deeply involved with local and state community organizations, serving in leadership positions for the Chamber of Commerce, Literacy Council, Rotary Club, Oregon Library Association, and Oregon REFORMA.

Josephine Community Library District FY23 Service Partners	
Asante Three Rivers Medical Center	Kiwanis Club of Grants Pass
Chamber of Commerce	Latin Interagency Committee (LINC)
City of Cave Junction	Literacy Council of Josephine County
Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library	Options of Southern Oregon
Four Rotary Clubs in Josephine County	Oregon Humanities
Foster Grandparents of Southern Oregon	Oregon Poetry Association
Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History	OSU Extension Services
Grants Pass Daily Courier	Project Youth+
Grants Pass Museum of Art	RSVP
Grants Pass School District 7	SO Health-E
Grants Pass YMCA	Southern Oregon Japanese Association
Illinois Valley Home Schoolers	Southern Oregon Amateur Radio Club
Illinois River Valley Arts Council	Sugarloaf Community Association
Josephine County Cultural Coalition	Sunny Wolf Charter School
Josephine County Food Bank	Three Rivers School District
Josephine County Parks Department	Therapy Dogs International
Josephine County Public Health	UCAN
KAJO/KLDR Radio	Williams Community Preschool

Figure 7: List of active partners.

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

In partnership with the four Rotary Clubs in Josephine County, the library administers Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. [Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library](#) is a book-gifting program that mails free books to children. Every child under the age of five in Josephine County is qualified to receive a book by mail, at no cost to their families every month until their fifth birthday. Every year, a diverse batch of books is selected for each age group including bilingual books in Spanish and English, with options for braille and audiobooks. In FY23, more than 25,000 books were mailed to children in Josephine County and 468 children graduated out of the program. Since launching, 4,682 Josephine County children have received 113,839 books.

Volunteers

The library system in Josephine County has a unique history that informs its special and enduring relationship with the community it serves. Because of a county funding crisis in 2007, all four library branches were completely shut down. In response, a small group of volunteers – who understood the vital importance of libraries to the life opportunities for children and adults in the area – banded together to raise awareness, funds, and more volunteers for the cause. They succeeded in reopening the four library branches in 2009 as a nonprofit organization. This nonprofit provided library services to the people of Josephine County, on the strength of a largely volunteer staff and donated funds until voters approved the formation of a special district in 2017.

Given this exceptional backstory – in which the very existence of the libraries in Josephine County relied on the passion, dedication, and generosity of ordinary citizen volunteers – it could be said that deep engagement and collaboration with the community are baked in to the “DNA” of Josephine Community Library. Even now as a tax-funded library district, Josephine Community Library still has a robust volunteer program that is synonymous with deep community engagement peopled by an amazing cadre of about 200 volunteers per year. These volunteers catalog books, issue library cards, answer questions at the information desk, check books out and in, shelve returned books, and help patrons with computers and other technology.

Volunteer Hours						
Branch	Number of recorded volunteer hours					
	Pre-COVID		Post-COVID			
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Grants Pass	21,912	22,860	15,032	2,341	9,865	13,136
Illinois Valley	2,890	2,765	1,775	408	1,332	1,929
Williams	639	711	582	186	629	812
Wolf Creek	604	354	436	122	156	354
Total	26,045	26,690	17,825	3,057	11,981	16,230

Figure 8: Pre- and post-COVID comparison of recorded volunteer hours.

This level of volunteer engagement is a unique form of government transparency. The program offers community members – especially seniors – the opportunity to be part of shaping the culture of the library, building networks of friends, and engaging in lifelong learning. The volunteers of Josephine Community Library are ambassadors in the community, and they are the community working in the library helping their neighbors fulfill their information needs and their wants for education, employment, and enrichment.

Volunteer engagement remained high in FY22-23, with a 26 percent increase in volunteer hours from the previous year. While the overall volunteer program remains low compared to pre-pandemic statistics, the library board of directors voted to make volunteer engagement a central focus of its new strategic plan for 2024-27.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

In May 2017, a permanent library tax rate of 39 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value was established through voter approval. The library system serves a population of 40,439 residents in the noncontiguous areas surrounding the branch libraries in Grants Pass, Illinois Valley, Williams, and Wolf Creek.

In FY23, the district received approximately \$1,557,000 in tax revenue. In its third year of library operations utilizing a budget of \$3 million, the library completed several facilities and equipment upgrades, including a shelving reconfiguration project at the Wolf Creek branch, additional security cameras at the Williams branch, and upgraded fluorescent lighting to LED at the Grants Pass and Wolf Creek branch facilities. With the assistance of the Grants Pass Fire Department, the branch updated and addressed fire safety and updated compliance with required fire regulations. Highlights of technical service purchases included the upgrade of the Polaris integrated library system, and additional hardware and software to support the library system in case of equipment failure. Pauly Rogers & Co. completed the district's annual audit in June 2023 with a clean opinion.

The final budget for FY23 was \$3,828,615 with an unappropriated ending fund balance of \$600,000. Preliminary analysis of actual general fund expenditures for the fiscal year equal \$1,502,720 with grant expenditures totaling \$103,260. The library district ended the year with \$1,384,150 in General Fund and Enhanced Fund cash carryover, \$28,800 of which is restricted for grant-funded projects. The district ended the year with \$807,500 in the Reserve Fund and \$13,800 in the Maintenance Fund.

Grants

JCLD seeks grants to fund projects beyond the provision of the standard operations budget. In FY23 the district expended \$103,260 in restricted grant revenue. The largest grant received included \$25,000 from the Dorothy Thompson Fund. The complete list of grant funders includes AllCare Health, City of Cave Junction Community Development Block Grant, Dorothy Thompson Fund, Josephine Community Library Foundation, Kiwanis, Roundhouse Foundation, and State Library of Oregon for Ready To Read Grant.

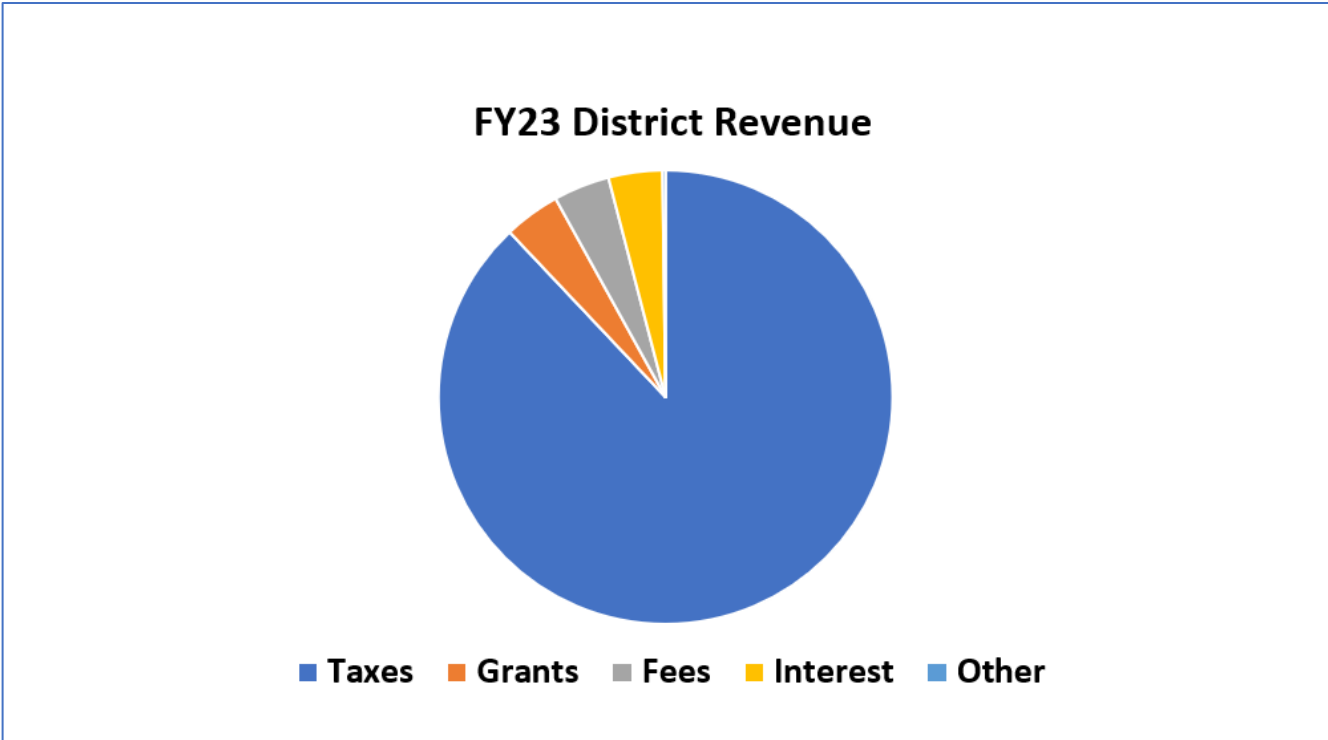


Figure 9: FY22-23 library district revenue by major category.

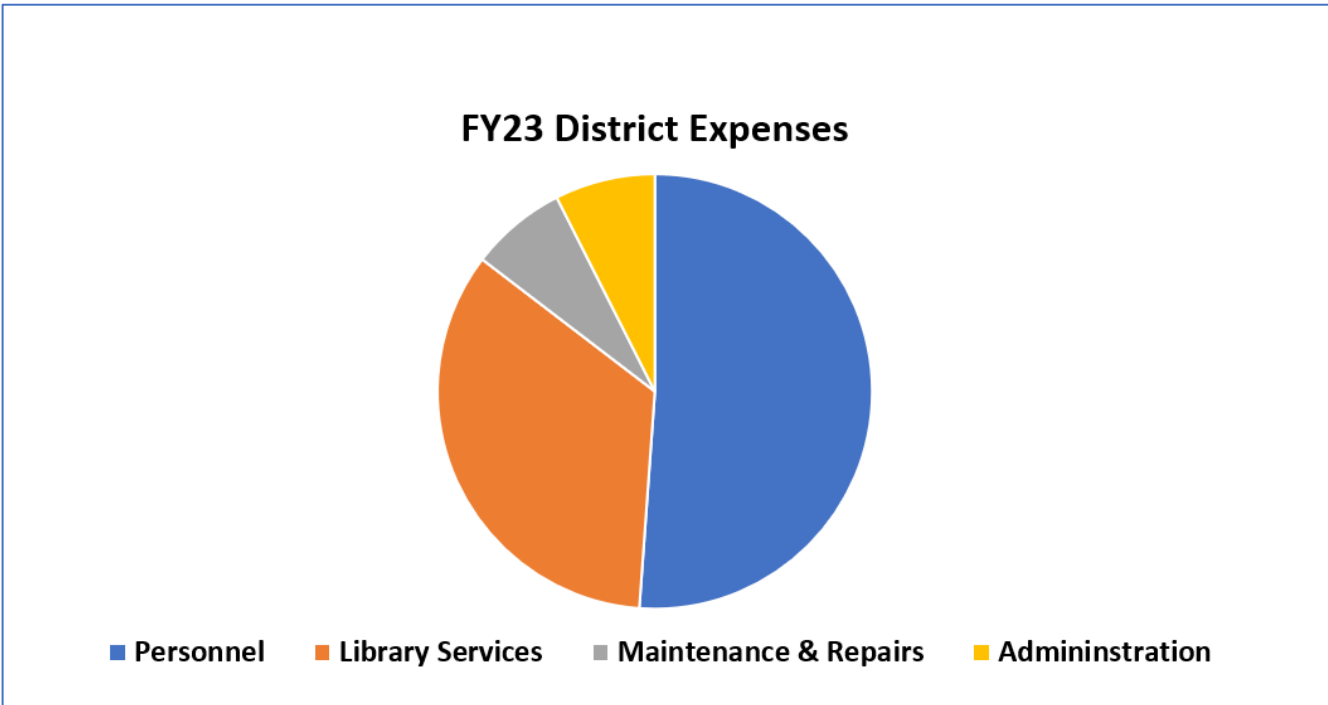


Figure 10: FY22-23 library district expenses by major category.

FACILITIES

The library district owns two of its four library buildings, including the Williams and Illinois Valley branches. Josephine Community Library Foundation owns the Wolf Creek building, and Josephine County government retains ownership of the Grants Pass facility. The district renewed its lease with the county in December 2018 for use of the Grants Pass building for a fee of \$1 per year through 2025 with the option of a five-year renewal. Josephine County government offered a reduced fee for lease as part of its commitment to supporting its residents.

Three out of the four library branches are currently under reconstruction or renovation or planning for new facilities through partnerships with the library foundation and the City of Cave Junction. Planning and fundraising for construction of a new Williams library was completed in FY23 with construction slated to begin in early FY24. The new construction will allow for running water and a bathroom at the rural branch. An extensive remodel is planned for Illinois Valley library facilities as part of a Community Development Block Grant scheduled to break ground in September 2023, with the renovations expected to be complete in FY25. Additionally, the library foundation purchased a city block in downtown Grants Pass in June 2023. Concept designs envision the creation of a community center featuring access to information, technology, and community gathering spaces, which support education, connection, and local economic development.

Facilities Master Plan

Recognizing that a library system needs appropriate space — for collections, for people, for programming, and for functional operations — the district and the Josephine Community Library Foundation have established a partnership to improve facilities. To achieve this goal, the foundation funded the development of a [Facilities Master Plan](#), published in February 2019, which has formed the basis of a community capital fundraising campaign.

Since that time, the foundation has raised funds for both Illinois Valley and Williams capital projects, totaling \$5.5 million in revenue. Funding for these projects was made possible by grants from grantmaking organizations, government funds, and donations from thousands of individuals. For more information about capital campaign projects and the construction timelines, visit jclfoundation.org.



Figure 11: Community celebration with 125 attendees at the site of a new Grants Pass branch located at 6th & 7th and K and J Streets, July 22, 2023.