



Office of Community Involvement



Library Community Budget Advisory Committee

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (4) pages
FROM: Library Advisory Board
DATE: March 10, 2026
SUBJECT: Library Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Library Advisory Board (LAB) fully supports the Multnomah County Library's (MCL's) proposed Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget. The proposed budget allows MCL to keep up with increases in personnel costs (tied to inflation and benefits), along with the first year of all library buildings being operational, while functioning at a budget deficit. In considering difficult financial decisions in this deficit environment, we are especially appreciative of the effort MCL has taken to ensure the final budget submission did not result in the elimination of any frontline staff. We recommend adoption of the FY27 budget as submitted.

PROCESS

In accordance with Chapter 19 of the County Code, LAB serves as the Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) for MCL. LAB holds monthly meetings throughout the year and is kept up to date on library operations, programs, policies, priorities, and the budget. This year, the CBAC subcommittee of LAB met four times, beginning in December, to explore specific budgetary issues, including economic forecasts, internal services budget projections, security personnel changes, and increased personnel costs with new libraries coming into operation. MCL Director of Finance & Facilities Katie Shifley led these sessions and provided information, reports, and budget briefings for the committee's review, supported by Maddelyn High, Management Analyst. The CBAC subcommittee updated LAB at regularly scheduled meetings throughout the process.

EMERGING ISSUES AND CHANGES

The FY27 budget maintains MCL's service priorities and equitable service commitments while continuing to look ahead in anticipation of projected deficits. Budget reductions aim to minimize service level impacts on patrons and meet priority staffing level needs in alignment with MCL's Future Staffing plan.

LAB would like to highlight the following developments in the FY27 Budget:

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- MCL has raised the visibility of performance outcomes and key performance indicators in alignment with new budgeting for results guidelines, incorporating results from the patron survey, employee survey, and other important data points.
- MCL continues to adjust for increasing costs and inflation, slowed revenue growth, and changes in internal service costs as bond projects are completed and all library locations, including larger spaces like the new East County Library, come online for the first time in FY27. LAB would like to highlight this incredible milestone and applaud all who were involved in the 2020 bond effort.
- LAB also recognizes the challenges related to predicting internal services costs and implementing its new staffing plan as changes may yet emerge due to these new locations coming online. **We support MCL's recommendation to maintain the current levy rate of \$1.22 and evaluate increasing the levy rate in FY28 to absorb any novel costs, while keeping in mind that this increase would bring the levy rate to its maximum of \$1.24.**
- **LAB supports MCL's proposed \$2.3 million in deficit cost reductions, and the staffing realignment to support additional Public Services positions.** These reductions largely concentrate on administrative and operational changes rather than programmatic reductions in Public Services and include, but are not limited to:
 - Reallocating staffing resources to support 3.5 FTE Access Services Assistants at the Sort Center, offset by administrative FTE reductions in Human Resources, Marketing & Communications, and Public Services Division Management programs
 - Eliminating duplicate security coverage costs for Central Library by reducing overnight contract security while maintaining onsite support for critical hours
 - Continued reduction of simultaneous E-book holds from 20 to 10 — this reduction was part of the FY26 budget and has generated more in actual savings
 - Substitute staffing budget/cost-tracking changes

Finance Committee Members: David Jarvis, Ingrid Jacobson, Kelsey Fong, London Sorcinelli, Madison Riethman, Megan Parrott, Tia-Theo Thompson

Staff: Katie Shifley, Director of Finance & Facilities; Maddelyn High, Management Analyst

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- Reductions in materials and supplies expenses based on prior year actuals and FY27 needs
- It is notable that the options for reducing materials and supplies with minimal impacts to patrons or staff are nearing their limit. While MCL has been incredibly effective in holding non-personnel budgets flat to address ongoing deficits, LAB is concerned that future reductions may begin to impact frontline personnel and/or service priorities as the Library and County continue to face structural deficits.

BUDGET FEEDBACK

LAB's further comments and recommendations are as follows:

- We support library leadership's decision to delay raising the library district levy rate until FY28 when staffing and internal service costs are better understood.
- We recognize that FY27 will be the first full year (since FY23) of having all library locations online. This will likely put stress on the library's staffing and require ongoing adjustments.
- We support library leadership's proposed reductions, which seek to limit the impact on direct patron services, especially to underserved communities and support the library's overall service priorities.
 - While most of the reductions are coming in materials, supplies, and services, we acknowledge that this does impact staff, particularly in relation to reducing the travel and training budget.
 - We applaud the library's creative administrative and reorganizational changes, particularly related to the new substitute staffing teams. We do recognize that these will require ongoing monitoring as well managing library assets in collaboration with the Department of County Assets.
 - We are pleased that reductions made in the FY26 budget that decreased the number of simultaneous E-book holds (as well as holding the E-book purchasing budget flat) produced larger savings than expected.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Library Advisory Board wishes to give special thanks to Finance & Facilities Director Katie Shifley and Management Analyst and LAB staff liaison Maddelyn High, who provided outstanding support for the work of the board. LAB also thanks County Economist Jeff Renfro for his time in aiding LAB's understanding of the economic forecast implications. We thank the Library's Executive Management Team for their support throughout the year.

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