



## SPEAK UP FOR LONG BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARIES FY23 BUDGET ADVOCACY



Dear Library Supporters,

**Your voice and outreach are needed to support crucial increases to the Long Beach Public Library's FY23 budget. The Long Beach Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library invite you to join our advocacy efforts.**

On August 2, the City released the proposed FY23 budget, available at <https://bit.ly/3d4i5fC>. The City Council will now review and discuss the budget at a series of public meetings this month including the Budget Hearing on September 6 at 5:00 PM in City Council Chambers where they will have their first opportunity to adopt the budget.

### TAKE ACTION FOR THE LIBRARY BY DOING THE FOLLOWING:

**1) Send a Letter to the City Council:** We have provided a sample letter to the City Council in this toolkit that you can personalize and edit. Email addresses for all City Councilmembers are also included. We ask that you send this letter before September 6, when the City Council will have its first opportunity to adopt the budget.

**2) Show Your Support at the Budget Hearing on September 6 at 5:00 PM:** The City Council meeting on this date will include a budget hearing for the Library. Council Chambers are located at 411 W Ocean Blvd, Long Beach, CA 90802.

- **Public Comment:** There will be an opportunity for public comment. If you are a member of a community group or organization that is interested in participating, we ask that one member from each organization provide public comment —public comment will be limited to 90 seconds. Stories about how the Library has made a difference in someone's life are most meaningful.
- **Attendance (There's Power in Numbers):** If you choose not to speak during public comment, we ask that you join us in sitting in the audience at the September 6 meeting and holding up small signs in support of the Library. Signs will be provided on the day of the meeting. The greater our numbers on the date of the budget hearing, the more support the City Council will see there is for the Library.
- **E-comment:** You may submit an e-comment to the budget hearing at <https://bit.ly/3SGtVwX>. The option to submit an e-comment will appear closer to the meeting date. A suggested e-comment is included in this toolkit.
- **Provide Public Comment Virtually:** If you cannot attend the meeting in person but would still like to provide public comment, instructions on how to do so are available at <https://www.longbeach.gov/cityclerk>.

**3) Invite Your Friends to Support the Library:** Help us spread the word! Share the link below with friends, family, and colleagues through email and social media.

<https://www.lbplfoundation.org/advocate>

**Thank you for championing the Long Beach Public Library!**

## THE 12 PUBLIC LIBRARIES NEED THE FOLLOWING TO SERVE LONG BEACH

- 1) INCREASE TO THE LIBRARY'S STRUCTURAL BUDGET FOR MATERIALS
- 2) INCREASE THE LIBRARY'S STRUCTURAL BUDGET FOR MORE OPEN HOURS
- 3) PERMANENT ELIMINATION OF FINES FOR OVERDUE BOOKS AND MATERIALS

## LONG BEACH RESIDENTS DESERVE GREATER INVESTMENTS IN THEIR LIBRARIES

The 12 Long Beach public libraries bridge educational, digital, economic, and cultural divides. A [March 2022 report](#) from the Long Beach Unified School District showed that 61 percent of elementary and 66 percent of middle school students read below grade level during the first in-person school year since the pandemic began. **Now more than ever, Long Beach families need increased access to the crucial educational resources the Library has to offer.**

## HOW DOES THE LONG BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY COMPARE TO OTHER SYSTEMS

LIBRARY SYSTEM	CITY POP. (2020)	# OF LIBRARIES	# OF LIBRARIES OPEN 7 DAYS/ WEEK	AVERAGE OPEN HOURS/ WEEK AT A LIBRARY IN THIS SYSTEM	MATERIALS BUDGET EXPENDITURE / RESIDENT (FY20)	TOTAL BUDGET (FY22)
Long Beach	462,081	12	0 (All libraries open 5 days/week)	34.3 hours/week	\$1.43	\$16,632,492
Oakland	422,575	18	3 (14 libraries open 6 days/week)	49.1 hours/week	\$4.05	\$45,748,038
Pasadena	142,017	9 currently open – Central Library closed for renovation	1 (7 libraries open 6 days/week)	48 hours/week	\$7.48	\$21,084,029
San Francisco	874,784	28	22	49.1 hours/week	\$16.51	\$171,192,006

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE CITY COUNCIL TO SEND A LETTER BEFORE SEPTEMBER 6

A suggested letter is included on the next page to personalize and edit as you see fit. We ask that you send your letter to all City Councilmembers so that they will all see your support for the Library. To view a map of the City Council district boundaries, visit <https://bit.ly/3BGYH2z>.

Councilwoman Mary Zendejas: [district1@longbeach.gov](mailto:district1@longbeach.gov)

Councilwoman Cindy Allen: [district2@longbeach.gov](mailto:district2@longbeach.gov)

Councilwoman Suzie Price: [district3@longbeach.gov](mailto:district3@longbeach.gov)

Councilman Daryl Supernaw: [district4@longbeach.gov](mailto:district4@longbeach.gov)

Councilwoman Stacy Mungo Flanigan: [district5@longbeach.gov](mailto:district5@longbeach.gov)

Councilwoman Suely Saro: [district6@longbeach.gov](mailto:district6@longbeach.gov)

Councilmember Roberto Uranga: [district7@longbeach.gov](mailto:district7@longbeach.gov)

Councilmember Al Austin: [district8@longbeach.gov](mailto:district8@longbeach.gov)

Vice Mayor Rex Richardson: [district9@longbeach.gov](mailto:district9@longbeach.gov)

## E-COMMENT INSTRUCTIONS

You may submit an e-comment to the City's budget hearing at <https://bit.ly/3SGtVwX>. The option to submit an e-comment will appear closer to the meeting date and expire on September 6 at 4:00 PM. We recommend submitting a letter to the City Council before September 6 and an e-comment at this meeting.

**Suggested E-Comment (Please note that e-comments are limited to 1,000 characters with spaces):** As a supporter of education and literacy, I urge the City Council to increase the Library's FY23 structural budget so that it may offer more materials to residents, increase its open hours, and permanently eliminate overdue fines. The 12 public libraries bridge educational, digital, economic, and cultural divides despite being open only 34.3 hours per week on average and having a materials budget that has not been increased in more than a decade. One-time funding is not a sustainable way to promote equity in Long Beach. I urge you to provide the Library with the structural funding necessary to increase its access to crucial educational resources. Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

## LETTER TO CITY COUNCIL – SEND TO THE ENTIRE COUNCIL BEFORE SEPTEMBER 6

*Personalize and edit as you see fit.*

[Date]

Long Beach City Council  
411 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**RE: Request to increase the Library's FY23 structural budget for materials and open hours**

Honorable Members of the City Council:

As a supporter of education and literacy, I urge you to increase the Long Beach Public Library's FY23 structural budget so that it may offer more materials to residents and increase its open hours. The City's FY23 proposed budget includes the first significant increases to the Library's structural budget in more than a decade. However, these proposed increases are insufficient and do not allow the Library to open its doors more hours to provide greater access to books, WiFi and computers, adaptive technology for those with disabilities, homework help, job search support, and more. According to a March 2022 report from the Long Beach Unified School District, 61 percent of elementary and 66 percent of middle school students in Long Beach read below grade level during the first in-person school year since the pandemic began. **Now more than ever, Long Beach families need increased access to the crucial educational resources the Library has to offer.**

In order to make crucial educational resources more accessible for the many in Long Beach who depend on the 12 public libraries, I ask the City Council to do the following:

**Increase the Library's structural budget for materials:** The City's proposed FY23 budget includes a \$400,000 structural increase for materials — the first budget increase for library materials in more than a decade — and an additional \$400,000 in one-time funding for materials. I ask you to make the proposed \$400,000 in one-time funding for materials a part of the Library's structural budget — for a total of \$800,000 in additional structural funds for materials — so the Library can continue to plan essential updates to its collection. This is especially important as the Library looks to increase its materials in Spanish, Khmer, Tagalog, and other languages spoken in Long Beach homes.

**Increase the Library's structural budget for more open hours:** The FY23 proposed budget does not include any funding for additional open hours at our public libraries when the community needs greater access. The 12 Long Beach public libraries are open an average of 34.3 hours per week. Last year, the City Auditor noted that Long Beach is well behind peer library systems which average 48 to 61 open hours per week. Cities with a similar population size to Long Beach, like Oakland, Miami, and New Orleans, have more public libraries open significantly more hours than Long Beach to promote equity. Long Beach residents deserve greater access to their libraries.

**Approve the recommendation to eliminate fines for overdue books and materials:** I ask that you approve the City Manager's recommendation to eliminate overdue fines so that Long Beach may join the Los Angeles Public Library and Los Angeles County Library systems in permanently removing this barrier to equity. The City Auditor recommended permanently eliminating overdue fines because they financially burden low-income families, they are unlikely to increase the likelihood that library materials will be returned on time, and the revenue collected is not worth the time it takes for library staff to monitor and collect fines.

Now more than ever, residents deserve more significant investments in free educational resources. Thank you for your consideration as you lead Long Beach.

Respectfully,