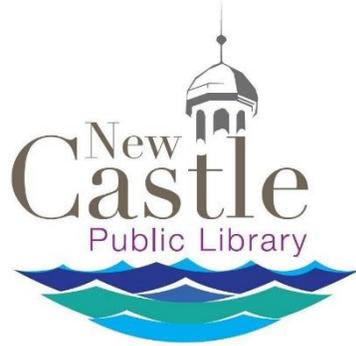


New Castle County Department of Community Services

New Castle Public Library



**FY 2025
End of Year Report
And
Goals for FY2026**

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**New Castle Public Library - End of Year Report
Accomplishments for FY25 and Goals for FY26**

I. Mission and Vision Statement

Mission: New Castle County Libraries bring people together to learn, grow, and enjoy. We provide access to books, programs, and resources that support learning, creativity, and connection. Our libraries are welcoming spaces where everyone can explore, share, and thrive.

Vision: New Castle Public Library strives to be a hub of lifelong learning and discovery, working with every generation of our diverse and historic community to offer inspiration, connection, opportunities for growth and renewal, and a celebration of the transformative power of knowledge.

II. Priority Items

- Lighting in the main section of the library - the high ceilings - needs to be replaced.
- Carpeting throughout the library needs replacing.
- The board is exploring grant and donor opportunities for additional revenue.
- The library is developing fundraising events.

III. Accomplishments from Fiscal Year 2025 (July 2024-June 2025)

A. Significant Accomplishments

Facility

- Three ERV units of the HVAC system were repaired after becoming inoperable.
- One heat pump that services the Conference Room was replaced. This has significantly lowered the humidity levels in that room during the summer.
- The annual meeting between the library and the Trustees Property and Maintenance Committee was held in January 2025. The Trustees committed to a yearly maintenance budget for the library.
- The entire library was repainted, with the exception of the stairwells.
- The roof leaks into the bay window and the Rodney Room were repaired.
- The light fixtures in the children's room, the lower-level hallway, and the Community Room were replaced.

Operations

- The staff copy machine was replaced. The old one was ten years old and starting to require more maintenance.

- The adult collections were heavily weeded to facilitate browsing and improve shelf space availability.
- The teen manga collection continues to grow as it is the most popular of the teen genres.
- The Library of Things puzzles and games are popular items for circulation.

Training

- Youth Librarian, Ewa Wojciechowska, attended the ALSC (Association of Library Services to Children) conference in Denver September 19-21. She and her colleagues presented a session titled “Turning the Page on Trauma: Libraries as Safe Havens for Children and Caregivers”.
- Due to the popularity of the topic, Youth Librarian reprised the presentation in a virtual webinar for ALSC (Association of Library Services to Children,) a division of ALA.
- Webinars on the topics of fundraising, hiring/personnel/human resources, conflict management, AI, merchandising collections, and preserving history were attended by staff.
- Library Executive Director attended several workshops presented by DANA (Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement) which included networking with other nonprofit leaders. Topics included board management and funding shortages.

Partnerships

- The library cultivated partnerships with the following organizations:
 - Community Collaboration of Delaware
 - The Spirit of Christmas, a city event
 - Arasapha Garden Club
 - Summer History Camp, provided by New Castle Courthouse Museum, in partnership with National Park Service, George Read House, New Castle Historical Society
 - Claymont Community Center
 - Mr. Kleen’s Laundromats, two locations in New Castle
 - Daughters of the American Revolution, Battell and Read Chapter
 - Operation Warm
 - City of New Castle
 - New Castle Presbyterian Church
 - The Mercury Café and Tea House
 - Porto-Fino Restaurant
 - Oaxaca Mexican Restaurant
 - Phoenix Family Resources
 - Summer Collab

- Face the Facts Delaware
- Pike Creek Dental
- Vision to Learn
- St. Peter's School
- Forward Journey Adult Day Services

Staff

- Staff turnover included hiring a Library Aide to assist with circulation duties and various administrative tasks.
- Staff actively participated in or co-chaired county library projects and initiatives, including but not limited to New Castle County Reads, Longwood Garden Community Reads and Read for the Record. Dolly Parton Imagination Library and Blue Hen Awards are state-wide initiatives.
- Many staff are active members of the Delaware Library Association, serving on various committees and presenting workshops.

Friends

- The New Castle Library Friends membership remained level.
- The Friends Annual Meeting included a speaker from Delaware Humanities and a light soup/salad meal.
- They offered several book sales in partnership with other community nonprofit organizations and participated in virtual fundraising events. They worked closely with New Castle Community Partnership on ticket sales for A Day in Old New Castle for which they received a portion of the net income from the event.
- The Friends provided funding to the library for programs, digitizing New Castle Weekly, the walk-in collection, and other operating expenses.
- The Friends embarked on a Capital Campaign in December to raise \$65,000 to renovate the garden. They reached their goal in April with a fundraising gala, through grants from The Crestlea Foundation, Welfare Foundation, and Trustees of the New Castle Common and the strong support of the community. By the end of June, they had raised enough to also provide a shade structure.

Programs and Events Highlights

General

- Volunteers helped with various tasks throughout the year. Three devoted volunteers came weekly to pull holds. One volunteer visited the laundromats to maintain the collection of books there. Other participation was project based such as helping with the seed library or the Friends Gala.

- Winter Festival and Market hosted twenty craft vendors, including Arasapha Garden Club with their poinsettia and wreath sale. New additions to the Festival were hot dog sales, musical entertainment by Michael Hunter, and a visit from “Santa Bluey.” Anne’s Attic and the bake sale remained popular stops. The Friends book sale and raffle baskets were, as always, a favorite attraction.
- NBC10 News visited the library with then First Spouse of Delaware Tracy Quillen Carney to interview her about her children’s book, Books for Blue, and the book tour to the public libraries in the state. The library depicted in the book is New Castle Public Library, her childhood library.
- St. Peter’s School closed suddenly before the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. New Castle Public Library assisted in the dismantling of their library, taking most of the books to use in other facilities. Some were given to the Hope Center via the Lions Club; others were used to set up the Laundromat Library project. The library also took advantage of the offer of a Smart Board. It is installed on a portable cart to be used for programs and by organizations using the meeting rooms that have no technology in them.

Adult

- The second annual joint Adult Book Group and The Usual Suspects book discussion potluck meal centered on a discussion of [I’ll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer](#).
- Through an agreement with The Mercury Café and Tea House owner, Dwayne Foster, Adult Services Librarian is using Old Town Hall for showing movies. Mr. Foster rents the building from the Trustees of New Castle Common, and in turn, rents it to the library for a nominal fee. Weekly art house movies are screened. The space is used for music performances on occasion as well.
- The Joy of Drawing, a Creative Aging Grant program through the Delaware Division of the Arts, allowed ten senior patrons to explore their creativity. This culminated in a final reception in which the participants were able to display and talk about their artwork.
- Through an Arts Access grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, an afternoon of music enjoyment engaged 48 participants of all ages in a concert of folk music, lessons on playing the spoons and a jam session in which everyone was invited to add to the musical presentation.

Teen

- VolunTEEN provided an opportunity for teens to work on volunteer projects that benefited organizations such as an animal shelter, seniors’ home and the library

itself. Volunteer hours are often required by schools, and this gives teens an opportunity to gain valuable experience and make new friends.

- Dungeons and Dragons program is a virtual program for older teens, held once a month.
- Various arts and crafts programs were offered throughout the year.
- Twenty-two teens enjoyed the annual Nailed It baking competition to celebrate the end of Summer with the Library.

Children

- Library on the Loose, an outreach program aimed at reaching underserved neighborhoods in the community, expanded to include offerings of food, personal hygiene products, school supplies and information from partner organizations. The program was made possible through a grant from Delaware Library Association, generous donations from local grocery stores and our partners. Over one hundred families benefitted from the offerings and resources.
- Vision to Learn clinics were held seven times throughout the year. The mobile clinic provides free eye exams and glasses to eligible school age children and teens. Each clinic filled quickly with a waitlist.
- The library distributed 53 winter coats through Operation Warm.
- Breakfast with Bluey, sponsored by the New Castle Library Friends, was an overwhelming success. The 639+ visitors each had a chance to take their picture with Bluey, make a craft, play Fancy Restaurant, Keepy-Uppy, and dance at the Bluey Rave. The line to see Bluey stretched down 5th Street to South Street. Families enjoyed a breakfast of bagels and juice while waiting to visit with Bluey. Breakfast was provided by New Castle Library Friends.
- A special story time was presented by then First Spouse of Delaware, Tracy Quillen Carney. She read the book she wrote titled Books for Blue.
- Prime Time Family Reading offered ten families a story time aimed at improving literacy skills and included a hot meal from local restaurants. The six-week program, in partnership with Delaware Humanities and Community Collaboration of Delaware, provided books for the families. A storyteller and a mentor facilitated discussion about the book. Local restaurants Porto-Fino's and Oaxaca Bar and Grill provided the food that was offered as part of the program.
- Prime Time Family Reading, held in the spring at the Claymont Community Center, was an outreach opportunity to work with our partners at Community Collaboration of Delaware and Delaware Humanities. The program ran as it did at the library with local restaurants offering hot meals, a storyteller and a mentor to provide a story and discussion, with each family receiving a copy of the book every week. Seven

families participated during the six-week program. The librarian from Claymont Library attended to promote materials and services offered by their library.

Outreach

- Youth Services Librarian attended several back-to-school and literacy nights at Colonial School District schools.
- Teen Library Specialist attended the Pride Market to promote the library and offer materials and services of interest to the attendees.
- Library staff visited Forward Journey monthly to read stories to the clients. Forward Journey is an adult day program for people with multiple, severe disabilities.
- Library on the Loose is an outreach program aimed at reducing barriers to accessing library services and materials for underserved communities. Four outings during the summer offered materials and services to help meet the basic needs of families.
- Laundromat Libraries project provides books that visitors to the laundromat can use while there or take home with them. The inventory is mostly children's books, with the aim of getting more books into the homes of children, but adult books are also supplied. A volunteer visits the two laundromats where the library has an agreement to maintain the supply and clean up. The response has been positive by both the customers and the owner. Customers will also bring in books to share on the shelves.

Grants

- A grant for summer programming was requested and received. The New Castle County Council grant helps fund youth and teen programs and supplies for Summer with the Library programming as well as other initiatives for that age group.
- The Delaware Library Association awarded a grant for Library on the Loose.
- The Delaware Division of the Arts awarded a Creative Aging grant and an Arts Access grant.
- The Delaware Humanities grant made two Prime Time Family Reading programs possible.
- A grant from Delaware Division of Libraries helped ease the burden of the network outage due to the ransomware attack.

B. Challenges and Disappointments

Facility

- A leaking roof continued to be a challenge throughout the year. Multiple attempts to find the source of the leak eventually produced results.

- The library still has bats that live in the eaves that get into the building. Remediation will be attempted during the allowed time periods.
- Although the lighting in many parts of the building has been replaced, other areas and different types of lighting are still outdated and not working properly.
- The access control system needed to be upgraded. Finding a vendor who services the software was a challenge.

Operations

- Delaware Libraries experienced a statewide network outage from a ransomware attack. Some staff computers were affected which curtailed the staff's ability to perform their duties efficiently. The staff computers were a priority for reimaging. Public access was limited to using available laptops or printing with staff mediation. The outage lasted nearly three months. Although we were able to offer limited services to the public, patron access to the internet declined. The library also experienced a decline in revenue from the loss of printing and faxing capabilities.

IV. Goals for Current Fiscal Year 2026

A. Goals

- Pursue donations and grants from diverse sources and strategically deploy them so that unrestricted funds are used more effectively.
- Adjust collection development priorities to stay aligned with trends in print, media, and electronic resources.
- Continue to expand outreach efforts that provide services and resources to underserved populations in the community.

B. Challenges

- Identifying sources and grantors to donate or award grants. Organizing fundraising events presents an opportunity with the need to be cognizant of overburdening the community with requests.
- Exploring outreach opportunities that promote the library without exceeding the capacity of the staff to participate while also maintaining daily operations.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

- By realigning staff schedules and duties that enable outreach staff to participate while maintaining adequate coverage in the library may provide improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of the in-building services and resources.

V. Goals for Next Fiscal Year 2027

A. Goals

- Continue to monitor trends in library materials and adjust the budget to reflect patron demands and material availability.
- Continue to explore and identify alternative sources of funds via grants and donations.
- Seek opportunities to expand programming and outreach using partnerships.

B. Priorities and Challenges

- The priority and main challenge is staying within a balanced budget while continuing to offer the high quality of services and programs that the community has come to expect.
- A further challenge is to do this while keeping staffing levels the same but not overburdening employees.

C. Potential funding reductions

- Reductions in funding would result in less material for patrons.
- Workforce reduction would be a last resort.

VI. Performance

A. Comparative Data Chart

i. Budget and Expenditures

	FY23	FY24	FY25
Budget	\$838,871	\$853,426	\$855,494
Revenue	\$857,856	\$901,211	\$873,555
Grants	\$2,500	\$6,219	\$14,442
Expenditures	\$861,850	\$861,239	\$881,938

ii. Annual Statistics

Measure	FY23	FY24	FY25	% Change FY25/FY24
Hours Open	2468	2481	2457	-0.97%
User Visits	42438	45474	47254	4.19%

Circulation	49855	54822	63154	16.71%
Registered Patrons	4984	5716	5807	1.83%
Reference Transactions	3928	3265	3048	-5.52%
Programs Held	363	353	344	-2.48%
Program Attendance	6545	7353	8436	16.55%
Public Computers Sessions	5576	5313	3449	-33.43%
Wireless Use	4647	5555	5084	-10.14%
Meeting Room use	527	708	697	-2.09%
Summer Reading Club				
Registered	79	47	55	10.13%
Completed	25	22	18	-16.00%
Completion Rate	31.65%	46.81%	32.73%	-44.50%
Turnover		1.3	1.6	