

Frequently Asked Questions

Doesn't our tax money provide enough for the library?

Berkeley loves its libraries, and we commit strong public funding to prove it; but the taxes we pay can only go so far. Tax funds provide for the library's general operating budget. They keep the doors open, the lights on, the staff working. Taxes also pay for the library's regular maintenance needs, build its collection, and support some community programs.

What does the Foundation raise money for?

The Foundation raises money that goes beyond the basics. We provide funds to help advance the library's strategic plans, with emphasis on projects, and innovations that will make our great library extraordinary. Our focus is in these areas:

- **Capital projects:** The Foundations Neighborhood Libraries Campaign provided \$3 million to outfit Berkeley's four new or renovated branch libraries. Our current campaign, *It's Time for Central*, is helping improve the historic downtown library, including a lively, high-use Teen Room and a flexible, reimagined Reference Room.
- **Innovations:** Foundation gifts help the library stay on the leading edge in serving the community. Examples include support for Berkeley Builds Readers, an early start on literacy for preschoolers in underserved areas, and Cornerstones of Science, a model science literacy program engaging people of all ages in STEM — science, technology, engineering, and math.
- **Access:** Public libraries are foundational to strong communities. The Foundation supports library projects that expand access to information and technology for learning, such as funding to provide laptops for use by homeless teens.
- **Outreach:** The popular Library on Wheels book bike brings library services to community gathering places all around town — just one example of Foundation-supported projects to engage new users in the library.

Is the work of the Foundation ongoing?

Yes! Just like other communities with public library foundations, our work to support the library is ongoing. BPLF has raised nearly \$8 million for the Berkeley Public library -- the original retrofit and expansion at the Central Library over twenty years ago and for the Neighborhood Libraries Campaign in 2013 to outfit the four new or renovated branches. We continue to work with the library to identify needs and opportunities where gifts through the Foundation will have a significant impact and advance the library's strategic goals.

Today, the *It's Time for Central* campaign is the Foundation's focus. The funds we are raising will bring improvements to the historic downtown library, including a more flexible Reference Room; a new Teen Room imagined by and for Berkeley's teens; a more graceful, efficient entryway with better access to library services; vastly improved lighting and acoustics; and display cases for art and exhibits from the library's collections. The total estimated cost of this project is \$1.9 million, and the Foundation has committed \$600,000 to support toward that goal.

Looking to the next 3-5 years, we anticipate that the Foundation will consider partnering with the library in renovating other areas of Central, including the children's area, the music and art libraries, the Berkeley history room, and more.

How will my contribution be used?

Your contribution to the Foundation will support its work and projects like those mentioned above to benefit the Berkeley Public Library.

How much of my contribution goes toward administrative costs?

We have a small and an efficient office, with only one full time staff person. We keep our administrative costs low. In addition to fundraising, the Foundation staff offers support for programming, outreach and marketing, and other assistance for the library when needed. Our events and programs, such as the annual Authors Dinner and AfterWORDS series, depend on the Foundation's professional staff, along with a volunteer Board of Directors, and scores of other volunteers, including library staff, Friends of the Library and community members.

I understand that the Foundation also advocates for the Library. Does the library need advocacy?

In our digital age, libraries are more important than ever – they bring us together, give us access to information and technology for learning, and serve as cultural connectors. The Library welcomes 1.3 million visitors every year. For such an important and well-used community resource, the Foundation helps spread the word about the value of public libraries, keeps informed on issues that affect public libraries and library funding, and keeps connected with local decision makers, community groups, and professional library associations.

Can I direct my gift to a specific library branch?

All five Berkeley Public Library locations need the support of our efforts. Unrestricted gifts allow the Foundation to make grants to the library where the greatest needs exist and to support strategic plans that are designed to benefit the city's entire library system.

Can I make my gift in honor or in memory of someone?

Yes! Your gift in honor or in memory of someone will be recognized in the Foundation's Donor Report. Gifts over a certain amount may also be eligible for recognition in other ways.

Is my gift to the Berkeley Public Library Foundation tax deductible?

Yes. The Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Your gift is completely tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. When we receive your donation we send you a letter of thanks and a receipt with our tax identification number.

What is the library's annual budget?

The Berkeley Public Library's annual budget is typically around \$18 million. It is funded by the local Library Services Tax, private and public grants, and awards from the California State Library. In addition, gifts and donations from the Foundation received from individuals, businesses, organizations, foundations, and trusts all support the library. The Friends of the Berkeley Public Library earns money for the library through its two bookstores and they make annual contributions to the Library primarily for programs and collections. The Friends of the Library are also among the Foundation's lead donors for capital projects.

Who are the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library?

The Friends is a nonprofit membership organization whose purpose is to support the educational, cultural, and outreach programs of the library. They operate two bookstores, a large store on Channing Way and a small store inside the Central Library on Kittredge Street. They also have a thriving online storefront through Amazon.com and a giant annual book sale at Central in June. (See www.berkeleylibraryfriends.com for details.) The Foundation and the Friends work together and support each other's efforts.

What is BOLT?

The Board of Library Trustees (BOLT) is a five-member board, appointed by the Berkeley City Council, charged with the oversight and governance of the Berkeley Public Library system. BOLT meets monthly to formulate major policies and long-range plans for the library. They approve the library budget and respond to community requests and concerns about the library. BOLT members serve four-year terms.

Do I get any special perks for my gift to the Foundation?

Members of the Rosa Shattuck Circle — donors who make annual gifts of \$1,000 or more to the Foundation — enjoy invitations to special events and behind-the-scenes tours throughout the year. Donors of \$100 or more are recognized in the Foundation's *Donor Report* and all donors receive early notification of the Foundation's popular events, including the annual Authors Dinner, and monthly news and updates by email.