San Mateo County Libraries

Agenda Item IV. C.

To:	JPA Governing Board
From:	Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
	Masha Kennedy, Development Manager
Date:	September 10, 2025
Meeting:	September 15, 2025
Re:	Grant and Fundraising Report for FY 2024-25

Background

On February 6, 2006, the JPA Governing Board authorized the Library Director to approve the acceptance of grants as stated in Article II of the Bylaws for the Library Joint Powers Authority.

Article II states that the JPA shall "Authorize the submission of applications for federal, state, local, and private grants and approve acceptance of such grants as are received, and allow for the delegation of this responsibility to the Library Director" and "Accept contributions, or authorize the Library Director to accept contributions, of money or property to the Library system and make appropriations in accordance with any limitations imposed by the contributors on the appropriate distribution and use of such gifts, and the Library JPA budget."

An annual report is provided to the Library JPA Governing Board summarizing grants awarded during the fiscal year.

Discussion

Grant opportunities present themselves throughout the year and range from small grants designed to support activities at one library to larger grants that support systemwide initiatives.

While we actively seek grant support for existing and approved major initiatives, as a matter of practice, the organization does not apply for grants that establish new programs that will require ongoing funding requirements.

During the period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, the Library JPA was awarded three grants:

- $83,602 from California Library Literacy Services to support adult and family literacy services across our communities. Adult literacy, which offers free one-on-one reading and writing tutoring, grew 26% over the previous year. 122 volunteers provided 4,135 hours of tutoring to 167 adult learners across 11 libraries and online. Family literacy funding supported nine events that engaged 460 participants.

- $80,414 from Library Services and Technology Act Sustainable California Libraries grant. In partnership with Canopy, a local urban forestry nonprofit, we offered 17 bilingual programs focused on environmental, climate, and food justice, engaging 485 participants. Activities included listening sessions, nature and wellness walks, hands-on workshops on tree planting and care, and speaker events on climate justice, held at our East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, Millbrae, Atherton, and Portola Valley Libraries.

- $72,869 from California State Library to support our Lunch at the Library programs in Brisbane, East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks. In addition to free summer meals, the program offered books to build home libraries, hands-on STEAM activities, enrichment programs, and seven educational field trips to places like Monterey Bay Aquarium and the California Academy of Sciences. We also expanded teen summer internships, providing leadership experience, food-handling certification, and opportunities to lead programs at their local libraries.

The total grant revenue awarded in FY 2024-25 was $236,885.

As outlined in the Library JPA Agreement, the Governing Board is authorized to form and appropriately associate with one or more nonprofit organizations devoted to developing additional resources and funds to enhance operations and support San Mateo County Libraries. San Mateo County Libraries is fortunate to have support from our 10 Friends of the Library groups. In FY 2024-25, the Friends donated $241,799 to support local programs and services and the launch of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program in San Mateo County.

The Foundation for San Mateo County Libraries was established to complement the work of the Friends and focus on supporting systemwide initiatives and capital projects. In FY 2024-25, the Foundation focused on supporting the Imagination Library and developing a fundraising strategy for raising funds in support of the new library in East Palo Alto.

In FY 2025-26, we will be collaborating with Friends and the Foundation to continue to support the globally recognized Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, makerspaces in Belmont, Foster City, and San Carlos and to focus on increased support for library projects in East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks and Pacifica.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with accepting this report.

Recommendation

Recommend JPA Governing Board accept the Grant and Fundraising Report for FY 2024-25. Operations Committee members present at the September 9, 2025 meeting concurred with this recommendation.