

Director's Report

March 2025

Arlington Heights Memorial Library

GOAL

Strengthen the library's service outside its walls

AHML Continues to Build Upon Partnerships

“Love for NICU Babies”

In collaboration with C.I.T.Y. of Support, the Tween Advisory Group (TAG) created handmade cards with words of encouragement for care packages assembled and distributed by C.I.T.Y. to families with babies in local NICUs. TAG and Teen Advisory Board members sewed 56 scent hearts for babies in the NICU which allows babies and parents to bond even when they cannot be together. The organization Project Sweet Peas distributes the hearts to NICUs across the country including the Chicagoland area.



Arlington Heights Historical Museum

Digital Media Specialist Chris taught Arlington Heights Historical Museum staff how to use the Studio's digitizing kits.

Arlington Heights Senior Center

The library collaborated with the Village of Arlington Heights at the Senior Center to host a Rainbow Connections program, a discussion group for LGBTQ individuals and allies that offers a safe space for support and connection. Senior and Accessible Services Advisor Jessica facilitated the discussion “How to Have Hard Conversations,” sharing tips for navigating complex issues.

**Rainbow
Connections**
Discussion Group

GOAL

District 25

Youth Services and Community and Circulation Services staff engaged with students and parents at Ivy Hill Elementary's Multicultural Night, one of the largest in the district. Attendees who visited the library table learned about library resources including ESL and Literacy services, participated in fun activities and more.



District 214

Youth Outreach Specialist Amy and Youth Services Advisor Nicole hosted Buffalo Grove High School Career Life Skills students in the Hub. Among other activities, students created their own t-shirt design using the Cricut vinyl cutter and the heat press. The students will be wearing their t-shirts at an upcoming pop-up they will be hosting at Forest View Educational Center.



Northwest Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (NWHCC)

Community Engagement Liaison Catalina and Business Services Advisor Diane partnered with the NWHCC to host a bilingual event in English and Spanish. The event provided valuable resources for attendees interested in starting a business, registering a nonprofit, utilizing library databases and exploring funding and grant opportunities through the NWHCC. The library will host the next session in April at the Makerplace.

AHML Engages Community in Places Where Customers Are



Youth Services staff regularly visit the Catherine M. Lee Women's & Children's Center, a program delivered by Community Education District 214 which helps immigrants gain skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing English. Staff present storytimes and activities that highlight library resources and early literacy skills. Caregivers and their children also visit AHML regularly on scheduled field trips during class time—these visits allow all the students to participate regardless of time constraints. The greatest evidence of our success comes when we see the families visit later on their own.

Music in the Stacks continued with Nahum Smith of El Rey Music Center performing on the first floor of the library on another busy Sunday. The series, curated by Programs and Exhibits Specialist Neal, continues to draw a steady stream of attendees who fill every seat to enjoy live music.



GOAL

Staff Highlights from Outside the Library Walls

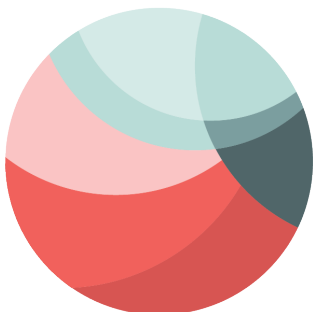
Youth Services Advisor Nicole presented "Look What You Made Me Do: Tweens and Teens in Makerspaces" at the Illinois Library Association's Illinois Youth Services Institute.



Congratulations to the library trivia team, "Trivia Newton John," who won first place for a second year in a row at the annual Arlington Heights Historical Society Trivia Night. Congratulations to Chris, Eddie, Jon, Melissa, Neal and Nikki who combined their knowledge of history, sports, geography and more.

Programs and Exhibits Coordinator Nikki continues her work on the Illinois Library Association's iREAD Committee and is currently serving as Resource Guide Coordinator. The committee received hundreds of submissions for inclusion in the resource guide from across the state, and Nikki will now take part in reviewing and editing to prepare the guide for launch.

Congratulations to Chef Brian from the Makerplace whose chili won first place in the Most Creative Non-Restaurant Chili category at the Lion's Club Chili Cook Off. A plaque will soon have a home in the Makerplace Kitchen. Thank you to library staff who helped serve the chili at the event.



Programs and Exhibits Assistant Jay is now a co-manager of the Library Administrators Council of Northern Illinois (LACONI)'s Highly Effective Library Presenters (HELP) Directory. Launched in 2023, the directory for library staff offers a resource for finding vetted library presenters.

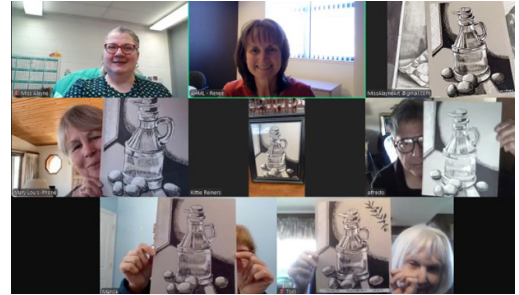


Grow the use of our services and resources

AHML Engages the Community Through Programs & Experiences at the Library

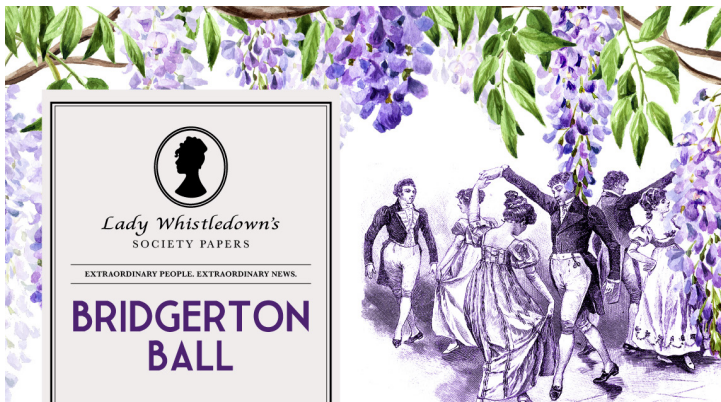
Creative Aging

"Art with Alayne" students were excited to discuss their projects and how much they enjoyed learning new techniques in ink. Some feedback from students included ***"This art program is wonderful—the instructor, the library facilitators, the projects, and the convenience of using Zoom."***



Additional AI Class

Technology Instruction Coordinator David taught an additional "What is Artificial Intelligence?" hands-on class which was offered to all customers on the waitlist from the January session. This extra class allowed for an additional eight customers to learn and experience AI.



Bridgerton Ball

Regency Romance was in the air on Valentine's Day during the library's Bridgerton Ball. Thirty-six couples, friends and dancers transported themselves to Regency England with Programs and Exhibits staff Nikki and Emily. Attendees dressed in their royal best and learned classic English Country dances from dance experts from the Chicagoland English Country Dancers.

Local Gardeners Series

As the library continues to meet the needs of local gardeners every season, Programs and Exhibits Assistant Jay kicked off the first of three seasonal gardening programs. Seventy-five gardening enthusiasts attended a presentation on pruning and other winter gardening tasks.

English Language Learners

The ESL and Literacy team facilitated 46 programs with 414 people in attendance. District 214's Read to Learn program returned with five sessions and 149 total participants.



New For Customers: Upgrades to Newsbank

Electronic Resources Librarian Bill facilitated the upgrade of library's Newsbank subscription to include historical content from the Chicago Daily News and Sun-Times, as well as additional full-image editions of current local newspapers. Newsbank is a global news database resource featuring online archives of media publications. AHML cardholders can access newspapers at ahml.info/newsstand.



Info Services Delivers Exceptional Customer Support Through Virtual Chats and Texts

Info Services staff actively engage in virtual reference and text messaging with customers. Last month, staff answered close to 500 chats and texts. Some customers shared their feedback saying they "love the service" and that they appreciate the "very quick response" from staff.



Vending Machines Installed at the Makerplace

Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris coordinated with the library's IT, Facilities and Finance teams to install snack and soda machines at the Makerplace. The machines are located on the lower level of the Makerplace which is accessible by stairs or elevator. Our community of makers now have even fewer reasons to leave the creative environment of the Makerplace.

On This Episode of "Did You Know"...

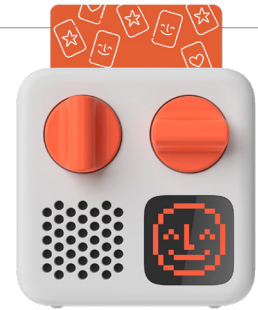
Did you know that AHML cardholders can get materials delivered to the library from ten different libraries in Illinois? AHML is part of the LINKin consortium which allows AHML cardholders to borrow materials from other group member libraries. Some libraries include Aurora Public Library District, Skokie Public Library, Elmhurst Public Library and Gail Borden Public Library. Materials including audiobooks, books and Blu-rays are usually available for pick up at AHML within one week if available. Between 2022 and 2025, an average of 633 AHML materials were sent out per week through the consortium.



Enhance the library's role in the everyday lives of the Arlington Heights community

New Items Added to the Collection

Yoto Cards & Players: A Yoto is a screen-free audio player and card system for kids that helps them learn and play. About 140 Yoto cards have been added to the children's collection as well as six players. The cards look like gift cards which have audiobooks preloaded on them. The cards can also be played on smartphones by simply tapping the card on your device.



Backpacks for Kids: Thanks to the Friends of the Library, the library now offers backpacks for check out. The backpacks are on display near the Kids' World entrance and come in a variety of colors.



Low Vision Equipment: Senior and Accessible Services staff coordinated the generous donation of a gently used Enhanced Vision Smart Reader HD portable reader/scanner from the estate of longtime library user and resident. The equipment enables individuals with low vision to retain the pleasure of reading by listening along or by attaching a monitor to view the text. The device has been added for check out to the Library of Things in the Assistive Devices category.

Makerplace Fosters Community Connection & Inspires Creativity Through Experiences

Info Services and Makerplace staff collaborated to host the Beyond the Book group where 14 attendees discussed *Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame* and customized aprons. Many attendees were new to the Makerplace and excited to learn about the Cricut and heat transfer vinyl.





Digital Services and Makerspace Advisor Beth guided 28 makers through a project during "Inspired By" Art Afternoon and Art Night that combined papercrafting and fine art skills based on themes and techniques from Faith Ringgold, a prominent African American artist known for her story quilts and works exploring Black and feminine life.

Fourteen makers attended the Maker Show and Tell meet-up where they shared about quilting, 3D printing, bookbinding, graphic design and a presentation by the first maker from the group to bring their products to market at a permanent craft fair in the area.



Staff Respond to Social & Economic Needs of the Community



Youth Services staff hosted a workshop for high school students where they learned tips for crafting resumes, filling out applications and interviewing. Community and Circulation Services Supervisor Megan, Digital Services Supervisor Gregory and Info Services Supervisor Megan assisted by performing practice interviews and answering questions regarding the interview process.



Full Kitchen for PADS Meal Prep

Community Engagement Liaison Catalina and Programs and Exhibits Manager Jennifer led a full kitchen of 18 volunteers in preparing lasagna casseroles to serve 45 people. For this PADS meal prep, the library partnered with First Presbyterian Church in Arlington Heights.



Community Blood Drive

We kicked off 2025 strong by partnering with Versiti and surpassing our goal. A total of 31 units were collected, potentially helping 93 patients through the library's efforts.

COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVE

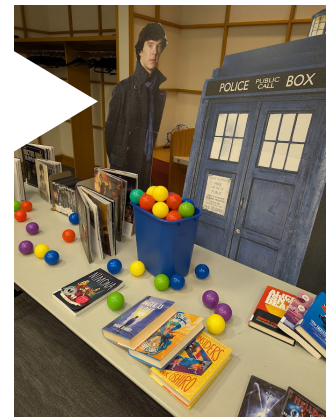


Faith Feeds Food Drive


The library partnered with Faith Feeds to collect food pantry donations for distribution across Arlington Heights, Palatine and Rolling Meadows. The outpouring of donations exceeded expectations, reinforcing the power of coming together to fight food insecurity.

AHML Continues to Engage Emerging Adults


- The library's new 20s and 30s event series continued with LEGO Night at Eddie's—a fun, relaxing event connecting 26 singles, couples and groups of friends. Programs and Exhibits staff Nikki and Emily hosted, joined by Communications and Marketing Specialist Mareliz, who captured the creativity for the library's social media accounts. Some attendees brought their own LEGO kits and others used the library's LEGOs to create their own inventions.
- Nearly 30 emerging adults attended Genealogy and Local History Librarian Eddie's local history presentation, "Dashcon: A 2014 Social Media Phenomenon." The program delved into the 2014 Dashcon social media convention in Schaumburg, a widely reported event described by the Chicago Tribune as "a fiasco of an event gone horribly wrong." Attendees engaged with library materials related to the Superwholock fandom, browsed books by Dashcon authors and posed for photos with a makeshift ballpit in honor of the 2014 event.



What Customers Are Saying




Youth Services staff member shared: ***"A storytime family shared that their older daughter sits on the steps at home with a stuffed animal dog and "plays" storytime with her little brother. They wake up the dog stuffy just like we wake up Dewey in storytime."***




"I'm deeply grateful to the amazing teachers at AHML for providing excellent lessons. Meeting and interacting with people from various countries around the world has been incredibly inspiring and has made me realize the importance of seeing things from diverse perspectives."

-Two Year ESL Program Attendee




***"Very well run." "Great step by step instructions."
"Accommodated slower learners."***

-Sew a Tote Bag Attendees




"Thanks for bringing diverse programming such as this one!"

- Weather and Storm Chasing 101 Attendee



"Gave me the opportunity to see this movie for free in a comfortable setting."

-Oscar Double Feature Attendee



Youth Services staff member shared: ***"At the Winter Carnival hosted by the Middle School Volunteer Panel, a retired middle school principal shared with staff how pleasantly surprised and impressed he was to hear how the teen volunteers planned nine carnival games including decorations, running them at the event and more. The kids he brought to the event were enthusiastic about all the games as were the other 100 attendees."***

Arlington Heights Memorial Library

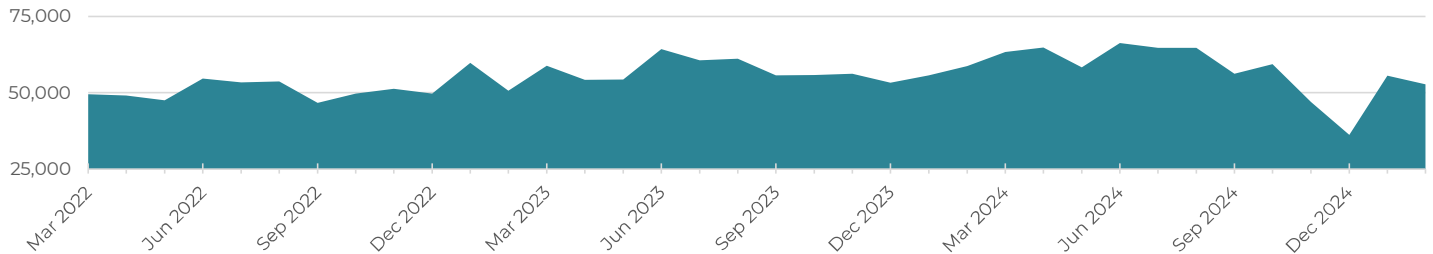
February 2025 Dashboard

Library Visits

81.7% of library customers in February visited the Main Library. Year to date, library visits are down -5.2%.

	February			2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Main Library	43,169	81.7%		88,970	94,793	-6.1%
Drive-Up	4,776	9.0%		9,835	10,370	-5.2%
Senior Center	1,568	3.0%		3,170	2,390	32.6%
Outreach	1,204	2.3%		2,041	1,825	11.8%
Makerplace	1,089	2.1%		2,295	2,795	-17.9%
Bookmobile	1,022	1.9%		2,119	2,235	-5.2%
Total	52,828	100%		108,430	114,408	-5.2%

Total Visits



Room Use	February	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change	Trend
Hendrickson Room	10	23	16	43.8%	
Conference Rooms	1,363	2,642	2,544	3.9%	
Total	1,373	2,665	2,560	4.1%	March 2024-February 2025

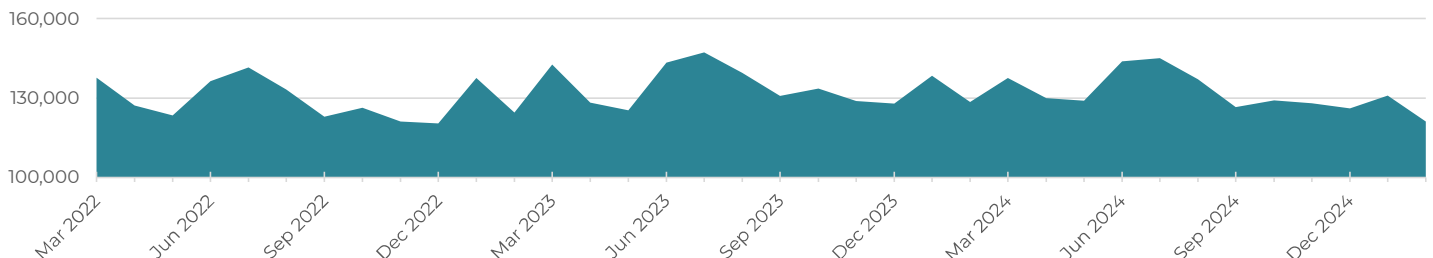
Library Cards ¹	February	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change	Trend
Resident	294	657	715	-8.1%	
Reciprocal	95	210	224	-6.3%	
Purchased	1	4	1	300.0%	
Total	390	871	940	-7.3%	March 2024-February 2025

Circulation

121,193 items were checked out in February. Year to date, total checkouts are down -5.5% compared to 2024.

	February			2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Print	67,003	55.3%		137,899	149,940	-8.0%
Downloadable	23,309	19.2%		49,139	46,314	6.1%
Audiovisual	21,668	17.9%		45,764	51,161	-10.5%
Other	9,213	7.6%		19,379	19,583	-1.0%
Total	121,193	100%		252,181	266,998	-5.5%

Total Checkouts



¹ New cards only. Does not include renewals.

Arlington Heights Memorial Library

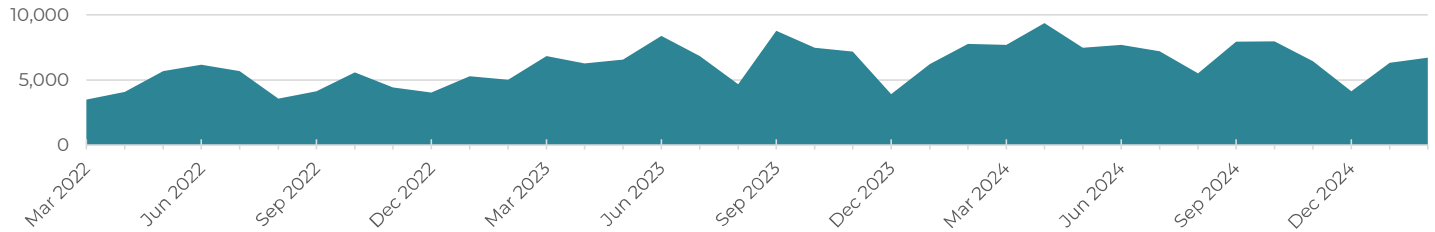
February 2025 Dashboard

Programs

4,307 customers attended Children programs in February, which represents 64.2% of all program attendees. Year to date, program attendance is down -6.6% across all audiences and program sessions are up 3.6%.

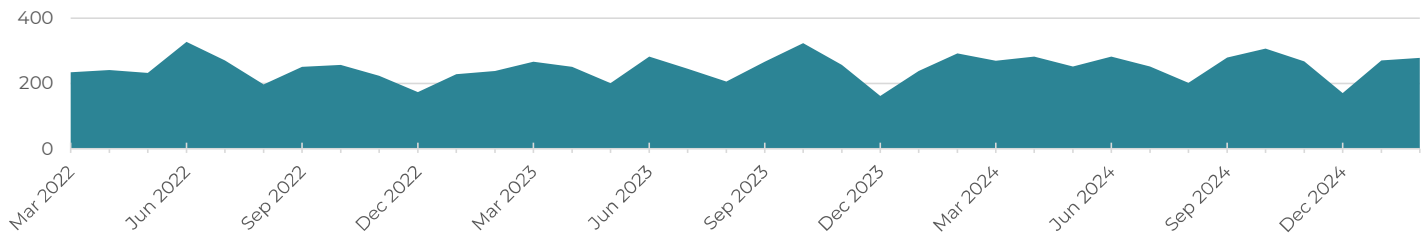
Attendance	February		2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Children	4,307	64.2%	8,097	8,471	-4.4%
Adult	2,079	31.0%	4,339	4,974	-12.8%
Teen	325	4.8%	608	527	15.4%
	6,711	100%	13,044	13,972	-6.6%

Attendance



Sessions	February		2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Adult	181	65.1%	353	345	2.3%
Children	85	30.6%	167	162	3.1%
Teen	12	4.3%	29	23	26.1%
	278	100%	549	530	3.6%

Sessions



Supplementary Programs and Activities²

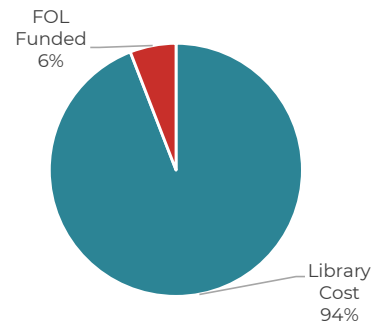
	February	Trend	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Attendance	1,798		3,245	2,501	29.7%
Sessions	21		44	39	12.8%

March 2024-February 2025

² Supplementary programs and activities are planned events where customers participate on their own, instead of at a designated time with a group. Registration is not required.

Program Spending

	February	2025 YTD	Budget	% Spent
Presenters	\$6,058	\$26,022	\$186,018	14.0%
Supplies ³	\$3,443	\$8,550	\$104,183	8.2%
	\$9,500	\$34,572	\$290,201	11.9%
Library Cost	\$8,362	\$32,534	\$242,701	13.4%
FOL Funded	\$1,138	\$2,038	\$47,500	4.3%
	\$9,500	\$34,572	\$290,201	11.9%

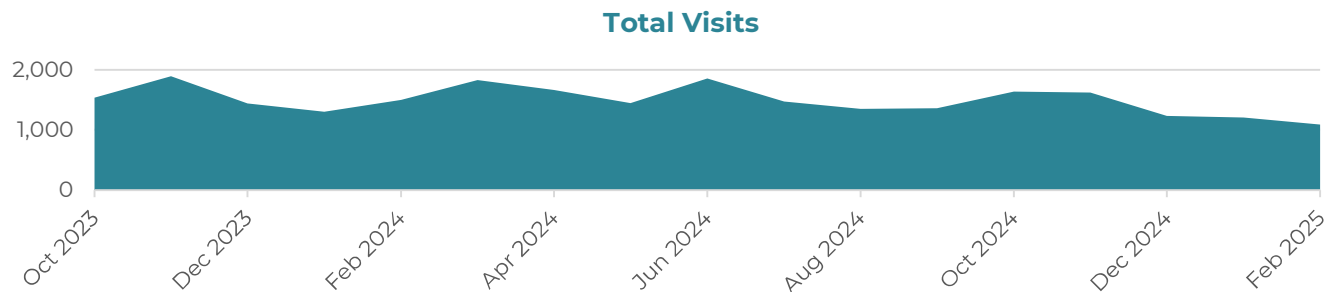


³ Includes supplies for supplementary programs and activities

Arlington Heights Memorial Library Makerplace

February 2025 Dashboard

	February	% New Users	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Makerplace Visits	1,089	6.4%	2,295	2,795	-17.9%
New Users⁴	February		2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Makerplace	41	58.6%	96	112	-14.3%
Kitchen	12	17.1%	29	43	-32.6%
Makerplace & Kitchen	17	24.3%	21	26	-19.2%
Total	70	100%	146	181	-19.3%



Equipment Usage⁵	February		2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Fabrication	132	52.8%	258	337	-23.4%
Small Tools	38	15.2%	113	92	22.8%
Sewing	51	20.4%	121	116	4.3%
Technology	19	7.6%	43	56	-23.2%
Art	10	4.0%	21	10	110.0%
Total	250	100%	556	611	-9.0%

Program Attendance⁶	February		2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
Culinary	80	32.4%	203	206	-1.5%
Maker	151	61.1%	232	273	-15.0%
Tour	2	0.8%	2	33	-93.9%
Other	14	5.7%	54	135	-60.0%
Total	247	100%	491	647	-24.1%

	February		2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
3D Print Jobs	128		294	382	-23%

	February		2025 YTD	2024 YTD	Change
eLearning⁷	245		496	313	58%

⁴ Measured by number of waivers signed for maker/fabrication, kitchen, or both

⁵ **Fabrication**: all fabrication room equipment except 3D printers; **Small Tools**: soldering irons, hand tools; **Technology**: design computers

⁶ **Culinary**: kitchen programming; **Maker**: hands on making programs (3D printing, laser cutting, sewing); **Tour**: attendance of facility tours prescheduled or drop-in

⁷ Niche Academy views of Makerplace resources