

THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC LIBRARY DISASTER RECOVERY BUDGET CASE

Sasha Hartman, Niko Luna, Jacob Muller, Danielle Tate

ILS-Z550: Information Institutions and Their Management

Alex Wingate

March 13, 2025

Dear Cameron Hamilton and Latoya Cantrell,

We, the members of the NOPE disaster relief team, are writing to you on behalf of the New Orleans Public Library System with the intention of establishing funds to be allocated for the reinstatement of the Alvar Street Branch.

Within this proposal, you will find the budgetary expenses required to reopen the Alvar Street Branch, maintain its operations, and effectively serve its community for its first fiscal year. All stipulations from FEMA and the Town of New Orleans have been considered during the evaluation and development process. Given the \$2,500,000 that our team determined could be allocated to the Alvar Street Branch as the model branch for this project, we are pleased that the final budget total amounts to just under \$150,000 below that figure.

The Alvar Street Branch of the NOPL system is located on the historic site of the old Guillot Market in New Orleans's Ninth Ward, a cultural epicenter for the city. The Alvar Street Branch's initial completion marked a monumental expansion of library services to the eastern portion of the city, and we hope for its return to act as a similar beacon of hope for members of the community. Our intention in beginning the project with the Alvar Street Branch is to return that foundation to the Greater New Orleans area. This branch will provide patrons with all standard library services in addition to numerous disaster relief programs and resources. This includes public internet access that will enable our community to stay connected and public space to act as a relief from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

This proposal contains a breakdown of our plan to have the Alvar Street Branch open prior to June 1st for the ALA conference and ensure we are able to provide for the community throughout the year. The budget accounts for the replacement of all materials and resources lost during Hurricane Katrina and a framework for new programs that will occur throughout the year. It is our hope that the identified priorities of local history preservation, community-led disaster relief, youth engagement, and digital literacy are well reflected in our budget.

Great pride has been taken in the chance to lead the New Orleans Public Libraries on their path towards reopening. By developing a budget that conforms to our current circumstances and reforming this space for the community, we hope to reflect our city's resilience in the face of shared disaster. We will continue to serve patrons of all ages and guide them through acquiring the skills and resources needed to rebuild.

Thanks to the generosity of FEMA and the City of New Orleans, the Alvar Street Branch will have the necessary funds to rebuild and to serve as a model for the restoration of the New Orleans Public Library System's other branches. We hope that our fellow branches will receive this same support and look forward to watching them prosper as the great city of New Orleans recovers from this disaster.

Sincerely,

Danielle Tate, Sasha Hartman, Niko Luna, Jacob Muller

Budget Overview

This section outlines the proposed budget for the renovation and first fiscal year of the Alvar Street Branch following the damage sustained during Hurricane Katrina. The preliminary figure set by the New Orleans Public Library¹ outlines an estimated cost of \$28,305,715.40 for repairing its twelve branches in the wake of this catastrophe. Of the NOPL's branches, the Alvar Street Branch was among the eight that sustained moderate-to-severe flooding damage. As such, we have designed this budget to fit within a constraint of \$2,500,000 in order to ensure proper funding remains for the renovation of the other branches within the library system. The finalized budget proposition falls below this constraint by \$144,880.67, at \$2,355,119.33. The budget is broken into the six sections displayed below:

Table 1: Budget Summary

Section	Total Cost
Staff	\$1,181,000.00
Furniture/Technology	\$286,703.75
Collections Development	\$253,025.60
Programming	\$548,210.00
Systems	\$3,979.98
Miscellaneous Operations	\$82,200.00
Total Project Cost	\$2,355,119.33

1. The Staffing section outlines the personnel that will be brought in for the reestablishment of operations at the Alvar Street Branch.
2. The Furniture and Technology section is broken into two parts, outlining the materials we will use to furnish and outfit the renovated branch for our patrons.
3. The Collections Development section, broken into three parts, outlines the materials that we will purchase to rebuild the Alvar Street Branch's holdings for patron use.
4. The Programming section outlines the annual allocation of finances for library

¹ The "New Orleans Public Library" will be referred to from here on as the "NOPL".

programming. This section also homes in on the four programs we have deemed “vital” to both the reinstatement of the Alvar Street Branch as a crucial establishment of the community and the broader Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts.

5. The Systems section outlines the various digital systems that will be used for the daily operations of the Alvar Street Branch and those that will be available for patron use.
6. The Miscellaneous Operations section outlines various operations costs or one-off expenses that will be necessary to re-outfit and maintain the Alvar Street Branch.

Staffing and Annual Salaries

Our efforts to reestablish the Alvar Street Branch’s place in our community in the wake of Hurricane Katrina’s devastation will require the work of a resolute, enthusiastic, and diverse team. As is stated in the NOPL’s 10-year strategic plan (2022a.), for the NOPL to establish itself as a crucial piece of the New Orleans community, “we must find inventive ways to connect and add value to residents across the city... [and expand] our resources and access to them by creating platforms to celebrate the history and culture of our city” (p. 10). Keeping this in mind, we will be hiring 24 new staff members in addition to the 19 essential staff members currently employed by the city. Our expectation is that the essential staff will move from branch to branch to aid with relief efforts and that some of the newly hired staff members may also be transferred to help the other branches recover.

The proposed salaries for staff have been determined based on the typical salary within the New Orleans Public Library System, alongside an analysis of the salaries typical for these roles in the area. Each sample was taken from the 2023 fiscal year² in order to provide an equitable assessment of salary. We have striven to ensure all levels of staff feel their work is

² There were two exceptions to this: the maintenance specialist and custodian positions did not have samples from 2023 that were publicly accessible via Openpayrolls. These samples were instead taken from the 2022 fiscal year.

valued and consistent with the rising cost of living.

Table 2: Staffing Budget

Staff Member	Salary Sample	Quantity	Proposed Salary	Total Annual Cost
Branch Manager	\$62,390.67	1	\$85,000.00	\$85,000.00
Archivist	\$78,024.37	1	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00
Librarian 1	\$46,306.18	4	\$48,500.00	\$194,000.00
Librarian 2	\$52,431.14	4	\$55,000.00	\$220,000.00
Librarian 3	\$60,859.67	2	\$62,000.00	\$124,000.00
Library Associate	\$36,119.21	6	\$40,000.00	\$240,000.00
Information Technology Specialist	\$62,390.67	2	\$64,000.00	\$128,000.00
Maintenance Specialist	\$27,219.80	2	\$30,000.00	\$60,000.00
Custodian	\$23,864.26	2	\$25,000.00	\$50,000.00
Total Staff Cost		24		\$1,181,000.00

The branch manager will be in charge of the oversight of all branch operations including staff duties, collections development and acquisitions, and patron services. The allotted salary for this position is \$85,000. The sample recorded for this position was \$62,390.67 (Openpayrolls, 2023), but we felt that this position, in particular, was critical to ensuring the wider success of this project. As such, we have determined \$85,000 to be both competitive and also in line with the gravity of this position at this current point in time.

The archivist will be in charge of establishing the Alvar Street Community Archive, an area within the branch dedicated to the preservation of the rich, diverse history of the Ninth Ward and the Greater New Orleans Area. They will also be responsible for running the Local History Preservation program. The sample for this position was \$78,024.37 (Openpayrolls, 2023); therefore, the proposed salary is \$80,000 in order to be competitive with other similar positions across the NOPL system.

The four Librarian 1's will be split into two groups. The first will be responsible for handling circulation and reference operations on a day-to-day basis, as well as helping to run regularly held programs. The second pair will be in charge of cataloging materials and handling

circulation. The sample for this position was \$46,306.18, so the proposed salary is \$48,500 per position (Openpayrolls, 2023).

The four Librarian 2's will be similarly split. The first two will act as leaders for reference and circulation operations, while the second two will be in charge of leading program execution and outreach. The sample for this position was \$52,431.14, so the prospective salary allocation per position is \$55,000 (Openpayrolls, 2023).

The two Librarian 3's will be the overall heads for their respective areas. One will handle cataloging, collections development decisions, and reference, while the other will act as the lead on program development and outreach. The sample taken for this position was \$60,589.67 (Openpayrolls, 2023). As such, \$62,000 is being allocated for each position.

The six Library Associates will be in charge of general shelving, daily operations tasks, working the circulation desk, and helping carry out programs where needed. The sample taken for this position made \$36,119.21 annually, so \$40,000 is being allocated for each position (Openpayrolls, 2023).

The two Information Technology Specialists will be responsible for the maintenance of all technology in the library. They will be familiar with the foundational digital systems present at the Alvar Branch and other general IT needs. The sample pulled was \$62,390.67, so we have allocated \$64,000 for these positions (Openpayrolls, 2023).

The two Maintenance Specialists will be in charge of general maintenance of library facilities and the repair of any other damage sustained. The sample pulled was \$27,219.80, so we have allocated \$30,000 for these positions (Openpayrolls, 2022).

The two Custodians will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the library premises to ensure optimal standards of cleanliness are upheld for patron satisfaction and health

safety. The sample salary was \$23,864.26, so we have allotted \$25,000 apiece for these positions (Openpayrolls, 2022).

These proposed allocations delineate generous salary amounts relative to our sampling in order to attract and support experienced professionals with a passion for upholding our core values of “Access, Accountability, Customer Service, Innovation, Intellectual Freedom, Partnerships, Preservation, Respect & Compassion, and Teamwork” (NOPL 2024b). Our hope in doing this is to lay a solid foundation of personnel for the Alvar Street Branch to act as a crucial pillar of the Ninth Ward and the greater New Orleans community.

Furniture and Technology

Our team has allocated funds to replace all of the furniture and technology after the flood damage assessment, as none of the items left after the disaster were recoverable. We have determined it a top priority that all patrons have access to the necessary resources to utilize the library as they would have prior to Hurricane Katrina. The proposed budget outlines the acquisition of furniture and technology to provide space for patrons to relax and engage with library resources comfortably. Our goal in allocating these funds is to provide both space and resources for our patrons to utilize the library effectively as an epicenter for the Greater New Orleans community.

Table 3: Technology Costs

Item	Source	Cost/Unit	Quantity	Times/Year	Total Proposed Cost
Television		\$500	2		\$1,000
Printer/Copier/Fax		\$150	2	12	\$3,600
Blu-Ray/DVD Player	Blu-Ray/DVD	\$90	1		\$90
Scanner		\$50	2		\$100
Staff Work Computer		\$900	6		\$5,400
Patron Computer		\$800	8		\$6,400
Catalog Computer		\$500	2		\$1,000
IT Computer		\$1,000	2		\$2,000
Tech					\$19,590

The renovated Alvar Street Branch will have 6 staff computers, 2 IT computers, 8 patron workstations, and 2 catalog computers. Staff computers will be allocated \$900 each, including monitors, keyboards, mice, and towers (M. Robertson, personal communication, February 20, 2025). Patron computers will be allocated \$800 each, the catalog computers \$500, and the office computers \$1000 (M. Robertson, personal communication, February 20, 2025). The difference in cost allocation accounts for the varying needs and tasks that we anticipate will be accomplished at each station.

We have also budgeted a total of \$100 for two scanners, as well as two copiers/fax machines that will be leased for \$150 each per month (M. Robertson, personal communication, February 20, 2025). The Alvar Street Branch will also be outfitted with 2 televisions, budgeted at \$500 apiece, and a Blu-ray/DVD player, which is estimated to cost \$90. The total estimated technology cost, therefore, comes to \$19,790.

The materials used to furnish the Alvar Branch will be acquired from Librarystore.com, as its products are designed to be used in library spaces. The number of shelves and tables required was decided through personal communication with Rinna V. Rem, the acting Branch Manager of the Alvar Street location.

Table 4: Furniture Costs

Item	Source	Cost/Unit	Quantity	Total Proposed Cost
Desks	Computer Station Desk	\$813.95	8	\$6,511.60
Information Desk	Information Desk	\$4,306.46	1	\$4,306.46
Circulation Desk	Circulation Desk	\$12,659.95	1	\$12,659.95
PAC Station Desk	Public Access Desk	\$867.95	2	\$1,735.90
Chairs	Chairs	\$369.95	40	\$14,798.00
Lounge Chairs	Lounge Chairs	\$1,748.95	4	\$6,995.80
Event Chairs	Event Chairs	\$57.95	32	\$1,854.40
Office Chairs	Task Chairs	\$299.95	10	\$2,999.50
Tables	Tables	\$1,068.95	5	\$5,344.75
Couches	Sofas	\$2,889.95	2	\$5,779.90

Bookshelves	The Library Store Shelves	\$1,352.85	150	\$202,927.50
Bookends	Bookends	\$0.80	1500	\$1,200.00
Furniture				\$267,113.76
Total Furniture/Tech Budget				\$286,703.75

It was determined that 150 double-sided shelves will be used to hold the library's collection and 5 tables, used for various programs and to promote a sense of community, would be sufficient to fit the new space (R.V. Rem, personal communication, February 27, 2025). The shelves will be the largest expense insofar as furniture, totaling \$202,927.50, and we will be purchasing 1,500 bookends for the shelves at \$.80 apiece.

Eight desks will be dispersed around the library, each with their respective computers, to provide patrons with internet access to accomplish various personal tasks. We will purchase 40 wood chairs to be placed at the various patron desks and tables around the library space. We will also be purchasing 4 lounge chairs, 32 event chairs, and two sofas to provide patrons with space to relax, read, or otherwise gather for library events.

An information desk, circulation desk, and 2 public access desks will be purchased in order to outfit our staff members with sufficient materials so that they are able to aid patrons to the best of their ability. 10 office chairs will be purchased for placement at the various staff workstations.

The total cost of replacing the furniture will be \$267,113.76. Between furniture and technology, the budget estimates an overall cost of \$286,903.75 to properly outfit the renovated Alvar Street Branch.

Collections Development

In accordance with the NOPL Collections Development Policy Mission statement, first adopted in 1997, "An informed and literate citizenry is essential to the future of New Orleans"

(2024a). Therefore, despite the fairly small size of the Alvar Street Branch lot, we felt it was crucial to develop a diverse collection for the newly renovated library. By doing so, we hope to ensure the collection is large enough to effectively serve the Ninth Ward and the greater New Orleans community through its recovery. For this reason, we have allocated for a collection of 15,250 books, 1,500 movies, and 75 games across the library’s holdings. We feel that these quantities will be sufficient to meet the needs of our patrons while the other branches are gradually reopened.

It has been determined that purchasing these books through Barnes & Noble³ will be our most cost-effective solution, given the organization’s institutional discount of 20% and the tax-exempt status of the library as a government organization in doing so (S. Marshall, personal communication, February 14, 2025). The funds for developing the Alvar Street Branch’s collection were designated with this in mind, following communications with two different B&N store managers and an assessment of their online marketplace (C. Spink, personal communication, February 22, 2025).

The costs and quantities for the collections have been broken down into the individual book formats, as the cost of a book can vary fairly significantly depending on format and audience. The total adjusted allotment for Collections Development is \$253,025.60.

Table 5: Collections Section Summary

Categories	Quantity	Total Raw Cost	Total Adjusted Cost
Books	15250	\$292,197.50	\$233,758.00
Adult	8250	\$198,417.50	\$158,734.00
Young Adult/Teen	2250	\$37,977.50	\$30,382.00
Children's	4750	\$55,802.50	\$44,642.00
Movies	1500	\$22,485.00	\$17,988.00
Games	75	\$2,479.25	\$1,279.60
Total Collections Development Budget	16825	\$317,161.75	\$253,025.60

³ “Barnes & Noble” will be referred to from here on as “B&N”.

Firstly, our Children’s Section will contain a total of 4,750 books, split up to provide ample options for young children of all ages and reading levels. On average, board books cost about \$10.99, paperback picture books cost about \$9.99, hardcover picture books cost about \$18.99, ready-to-read and step into reading books cost about \$5.99, chapter books cost about \$6.99, young reader paperbacks cost about \$8.99, and young reader hardcovers cost about \$17.99 (C. Spink, personal communication, February 22, 2025; Barnes & Noble, 2025).

Table 6: Children's Collection Breakdown

Categories	Average Cost/Unit	Quantity	Total Raw Cost	Total Adjusted Cost
Young Reader	\$17.99	1250	\$22,487.50	\$17,990.00
Young Reader	\$8.99	1000	\$8,990.00	\$7,192.00
Chapter Books	\$6.99	950	\$6,640.50	\$5,312.40
Picture Books	\$18.99	300	\$5,697.00	\$4,557.60
Picture Books	\$9.99	500	\$4,995.00	\$3,996.00
Board Books	\$10.99	500	\$5,495.00	\$4,396.00
Ready-to-Read Books	\$5.99	250	\$1,497.50	\$1,198.00
Children's		4750	\$55,802.50	\$44,642.00

Following the cost assessment, the quantities listed above in Table 6 were determined to be sufficient to meet the needs of this population. Thus, we have appropriated \$44,642.00 for children’s books. By acquiring these books, we will lay a strong foundation for literacy in the Greater New Orleans area in line with the first two goals of our S.M.A.R.T Kids initiative in particular: “Curate a diverse set of early learning resources to support the efforts of parents, caregivers, and Early Childhood Centers across the city... Create stronger alliances with parents, early childhood centers, schools, and community groups to further make a difference in the lives of young people” (New Orleans Public Library, 2022d).

Table 7: Young Adult Collection Breakdown

Categories	Average Cost/Unit	Quantity	Total Raw Cost	Total Adjusted Cost
Young Adult	\$22.99	1000	\$22,990.00	\$18,392.00
Young Adult	\$11.99	1250	\$14,987.50	\$11,990.00
Young Adult/Teen		2250	\$37,977.50	\$30,382.00

For the Young Adult/Teen section, we have determined an overall quantity of 2,250 print materials to be sufficient for meeting patron needs, with 1,250 paperbacks and 1,000 hardcovers. Young adult paperbacks cost an average of \$11.99, while young adult hardcovers an average of \$22.99 (C. Spink, personal communication, February 22, 2025). For this reason, we have appropriated \$30,382.00 for the young adult/teen section. Acquiring these books will enable us to meet the third goal of our S.M.A.R.T. Kids initiative: “Build stronger connections with teens by engaging, serving, and empowering teens through innovative programming” (New Orleans Public Library, 2022d).

Table 8: General Collections Breakdown

Categories	Average Cost/Unit	Quantity	Total Raw Cost	Total Adjusted Cost
General Hardcovers	\$29.99	4000	\$119,960.00	\$95,968.00
General Paperbacks	\$18.99	3500	\$66,465.00	\$53,172.00
Mass Market	\$9.99	500	\$4,995.00	\$3,996.00
Audiobook	\$27.99	250	\$6,997.50	\$5,598.00
Adult		8250	\$198,417.50	\$158,734.00

The third, more general designation of books will comprise the other 8,250 materials in the Alvar Branch’s collection, with 4,000 hardcovers, 3,500 paperbacks, 500 mass markets, and 250 audiobook CDs total, with their average costs outlined above in Table 8. The total projected cost for this portion is \$158,734.00.

The Movies section of the library will contain 1,500 materials, an amount we have determined to be sizeable enough to support our community. Considering the average cost of \$10.99 for a standard DVD and \$18.99 for a Blu-Ray/DVD set, we have opted to purchase roughly 750 of each (C. Spink, personal communication, February 22, 2025).

Table 9: Movies and Games Collections Breakdown

Categories	Average Cost/Unit	Quantity	Total Raw Cost	Total Adjusted Cost
Standard DVD	\$10.99	750	\$8,242.50	\$6,594.00
Blu-Ray/DVD	\$18.99	750	\$14,242.50	\$11,394.00
Movies		1500	\$22,485.00	\$17,988.00
Kids Games	\$19.99	30	\$599.70	\$479.76
Board Games	\$49.99	20	\$999.80	\$799.84
Lego Tubs (1000 piece)	\$59.99	5	\$299.95	\$239.96
Puzzles	\$28.99	20	\$579.80	\$463.84
Games		75	\$2,479.75	\$1,279.60

Similarly, for the Games section of the collections budget, it was determined that the library should acquire a total of 75 games. These have an average cost of \$19.99 per kid's game, \$49.99 per board game, \$59.99 per Lego tub, and \$28.99 per puzzle and will amply support community engagement with the library across programs and through general operations (C. Spink, personal communication, February 22, 2025). These two allotments come to a total of \$17,988.00 for Movies and \$1,279.60 for Games.

This overall budgeted allotment accounts for the complete redevelopment of the Alvar Street Branch's collections and will be decreased to meet the regular annual needs of the library after the first year of operation.

Programming

Library programming will be vital to the reinstatement of the Alvar Street Branch as a pillar of the community as it recovers from this catastrophe. As such, it has been determined that the largest allocation of funding across the budget would go to the Programming section, with the four vital programs and a number of other general programs outlined below.

Table 10: Overall Program Breakdown

Programs	Est. Cost/Session	Frequency (Times/Yr)	Total Program Cost
All Ages Programs			\$10,440.00
Community Garden Development	\$300.00	24	\$7,200.00
Family Culinary Creations	\$150.00	12	\$1,800.00
Needlecraft Circle	\$30.00	24	\$720.00
Family Movie Night	\$30.00	24	\$720.00
Adult Programs			\$532,290.00
Community Disaster Clean-Up/Community Aid Information	\$10,165.00	52	\$528,580.00
Digital Literacy	\$1,310.00	1 *	\$1,310.00
Local History Preservation	\$100.00	24	\$2,400.00
Job Preparedness/Job Help	\$0.00	24	\$0.00
Youth Services Programs			\$5,480.00
Kids' Summer Reading	\$2,000.00	1	\$2,000.00
Teen Book Club	\$30.00	12	\$360.00
Bead Art for Teens	\$30.00	12	\$360.00
Reproductive Health Resources	\$40.00	12	\$480
Children's Story Time	\$60.00	24	\$1,440.00
Children's Lego Competition	\$15.00	12	\$180.00
Children's Craft Day	\$50.00	12	\$600.00
Library Scavenger Hunt	\$5.00	12	\$60.00
Total Programming Budget			\$548,210.00

Community Disaster Clean-Up/Community Aid Information

Helping our patrons get back to normal life helps us get back to being a normal library. In this program, librarians and volunteers will focus mainly on creating resource bags tailored to adolescent, adult, or infant care⁴. Giving our community members basic hygiene products helps restore a sense of normalcy, as well as eliminating stress that could come with anticipating those purchases. It is our largest item on the budget, requiring \$10,165 per week and \$528,580 over the course of the year. This initiative embodies several of the core values of NOPL, including but not limited to, innovation, partnership, and teamwork, as well as the values highlighted in our mission statement. The NOPL's partnership core value states that "We actively seek out ways to work with members of the community and other organizations. We can all do more if we do it

⁴ The adolescent and adult resource bag options have options for the inclusion of feminine care products.

together” (2024b). This statement forms the core of this program. The Community Disaster Clean-Up/Community Aid program will require volunteers, time, and compassion. Having support from the community is essential.

The program is going to run twice a week, with the first session dedicated to building the bags and the second session for distributing. The day for making the bags will involve unpacking the supplies, organizing them into their respective bags, and then finalizing them for distribution at the next session. Ideally, the day for distribution would have patrons coming to the library to get them, but if there is an identified need, librarians and volunteers can arrange to drop off bags to people who need them.

Costs for this program come from the items needed to produce a resource bag. Blueprints for what should be included in a resource bag were supplied from ‘Convoy of Hope,’ and altered for what was deemed appropriate in the current situation. Costs are also based off prices on Walmart.com and split into the number of units provided per bag (2025).

Table 11: Community Aid Budget

Girls	\$	#	Boys	\$	#	Adult	\$	#	Baby	\$	#
Soap	1.5	1	Soap	1.5	1	Soap	1.5	1	Washcloth	2	4
Socks	2.5	2	Socks	2.5	2	Socks	2.5	2	Wipes	2	1
Hairbrush	6	1	Comb	6	1	Hairbrush	6	1	Diaper cream	2	1
Snacks	0.5	2	Snacks	0.5	2	Water bottle	0.15	1	Baby Lotion	5	1
Water bottle	0.15	1	Water bottle	.15	1	Deodorant	5	1	Diapers	10	24
Hair ties	0.5	25	Deodorant	5	1	Band-aids	0.5	5			
Deodorant	5	1	Band-aids	0.5	5	Toothbrush	5	1			
Band-aids	0.5	5	Toothbrush	5	1	Toothpaste	1	1			
Toothpaste	1	1	Toothpaste	1	1	Shampoo	2	1			
Toothbrush	5	1	Shampoo	2	1	Conditioner	2	1			
Shampoo	2	1	Conditioner	2	1	Pads/tampons	1	5			
Conditioner	2	1									
Pads/tampons	1	5									
Totals (\$):	27.65			26.15			26.65			21.00	

Items like soap, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, and toothbrushes/toothpaste will be included to help increase hygiene and general self-confidence of the users. Some bags for adults will include feminine care products, others will not (this will be specified by the patron on pickup days). It was determined that socks and hair ties should also be added to provide some smaller comforts that the population may be lacking, as they are not always considered an immediate priority. Snacks and water bottles will be included to help with hunger and thirst.

Digital Literacy

Community members will be undertaking a crucial reintroduction to the internet and digital resources during our collective recovery efforts. As such, the Alvar Street Branch will be prepared to teach the skills necessary to navigate this reconnection both within our library space and for those returning to their neighborhoods. NOPL is dedicated to the empowerment of our community, whether for positive social change or economic advancement. This program will take a ground-up approach, starting by working to develop New Orleanians' virtual skills through free online training and e-Resources dedicated to improving digital literacy. Sessions and resources will focus on teaching internet skills (making searches, social media, emails, online safety), coding resources, typing, Microsoft Office, low-cost internet programs, device use (smartphones, tablets), and more. These skills will prove helpful for those wanting to reenter the job market, seeking online resources, or needing assistance handling different devices. We have also identified many of these skills as being particularly important during crisis recovery because many of the resources that provide disaster aid require applicants to submit forms and information digitally.

The digital literacy initiative of the NOPL cites digital literacy as “a crucial 21st century

skill,” highlighting its connection to the library’s core values of “Access, Innovation, and Intellectual Freedom” (2022c). Daily activities, such as communication among family and access to current event coverage, are vital to having connected and informed community members. Through structured biweekly lesson plans (classroom-style and one-on-one) for a variety of digital literacy skills and training software (such as LinkedIn Learning), users can pace themselves and exercise these skills anyplace and anytime. Staff training will include application of basic, intermediate and advanced questions revolving around digital literacy, seeing as NOPL notes that through “Accountability, Innovation, and Teamwork, library employees themselves are our most powerful digital literacy resource” (2022c). Our available resources and lessons will be marketed through our official social media, e-newsletters, and website.

This program will utilize two online training resources that have annual subscription packages. The first, DigitalLearn, has free courses and handouts for us to train users with. LinkedIn Learning is another resource that will be used and is designed for smaller groups. Northstar provided a direct quote for library plans on their webpage.

Table 12: Digital Literacy Budget

Programs	Plan	Annual Allotment
DigitalLearn.org	N/A	\$0
LinkedIn Learning	Organization	\$760
Northstar Online Learning	Single Subscription	\$550
Total Annual Budget		\$1,310

Local History Preservation Program

Considering the rich history of the Ninth Ward, where Alvar Street Branch is located, and the heavy damage sustained in that area, we feel it is vital to provide community members with ways to salvage and preserve some of their own personal history and the history of the ward. The Local History Preservation Program will be dedicated to ensuring that critical historical materials

of the Ninth Ward and the greater New Orleans Area are being preserved and protected, while also increasing community awareness about the value of local, community-led, archival ventures.

Our resident archivist will work through physical archival materials, utilize our various in-house technologies, and develop a small space within the library dedicated to the preservation of the history of the Ninth Ward. On a bi-weekly basis, they will hold interactive preservation sessions open to members of the community. These sessions will inform patrons how to properly preserve materials and teach them about the value of retaining these pieces of local history. This program will also teach patrons about proper digitization and storage practices for archival materials.

Table 13: Community Archives Budget

Item	Allotment/Session	Annual Allotment
Paper Handouts	\$5.00	\$72.00
Various Preservation Tools	\$50.00	\$1,200.00
Flash Drives (10-pack, 8gb)	\$25.00	\$600.00
Demonstration Materials	\$20.00	\$480.00
Total Annual Budget	\$100.00	\$2,400.00

The funds already allocated to the archive for materials⁵ will mean that this program will be relatively inexpensive to implement. Each session will be allotted a \$100 stipend for various materials, demonstrations, and handouts in the form of brochures, as well as small flash drives to store the digitized materials. Advertising for this program will encourage members of the community to bring their own materials to preserve/digitize, seeing as how many are already desperate to salvage what they can in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

⁵ This allocation is outlined in the Miscellaneous Operations section.

Youth Summer Reading Program

The reopening of the Alvar Street Branch in June will be the perfect time to get community members back into the routine of coming to the library with a big Summer Reading Program. This program will have a budget of \$2,000 (T. Walser, personal communication, March 3, 2025). Summer Reading Programs, especially those targeted toward children, work to promote engagement with reading material and get patrons into the library to utilize the other tools and resources available to them. We will utilize Collaborative Summer Library Program⁶ as our supplier since access to their services is graciously provided by the state government.

The Summer Reading Program will run from the time of the Alvar Street Branch's reopening until the end of July. This will include a week after the reopening for patrons to begin sign-ups and for staff to finish decorating before jumping into the fun. After that, we will have additional themed programs on top of the regularly scheduled ones. The program will finish out with a final "End of Summer" party that will take place in a local park at the end of July.

By adding Summer Reading-specific decorations, the hard work that has been put into returning our branch to the community will only be further emphasized. Utilizing a few cost-effective decorations, such as posters that can be reused, streamers, and homemade decorations created by members of our community, we can create a fun and unique space for patrons to enjoy. The goal is to create a lively and inviting space within the library during these difficult times.

There will be five programs added to the schedule throughout Summer Reading: sidewalk chalk day, tie-dye, DIY customization for beginners, gratitude cards, and friendship bracelets. All five of these programs will be available to kids and teens.

⁶ "Collaborative Summer Library Program" will be referred to as "CSLP" from here on.

The “End of Summer” party will take place outside of the library within a rental space, where we will provide snacks and games for families to come together and celebrate one last time before everyone returns to school. This will also be where we announce the winners of the two large prizes that kids will enter to win throughout the summer!

Table 14: Summer Reading Budget

Category	Items	Allotment
Shirts	Shirts for all patron-facing staff	\$300.00
Reading Logs	Reading logs for a variety of ages to track reading	\$15.00
Goodie Bags	Small items (Stickers, activity sheets, temporary tattoos, etc.) and bags to receive with reading logs	\$200.00
Prizes	Small prizes for certain reading log milestones and two large prizes kids may enter for a chance to win	\$450.00
Decorations	A variety of both CSLP branded decorations and plain decorations (posters, streamers, etc.)	\$50.00
Tie-Dye Program	Tie-dye kits and plain socks for kids to tie-dye if they don't have their own items	\$65.00
Chalk Program	Sidewalk chalk	\$30.00
DIY Program	Colored duct-tape, markers, stickers, etc.	\$30.00
Gratitude Card Program	Cardstock, stickers, markers, etc.	\$30.00
Friendship Bracelet Program	Beads and bracelet string	\$40.00
End of Summer Party	Rental cost, snack food, and outdoor games	\$750.00
Total	All necessary items	\$2,000.00

General Programming

The first general allotment that must be considered is the budget for the all-ages programs, which is set at \$10,440.00. This includes money for four programs, with a total of 72 sessions of programming. These programs are wide-reaching and aim to promote participation and engagement from patrons of all ages.

Table 15: All Ages Programs Allotments

Programs	Est. Cost/Session	Frequency (Times/Yr)	Total Program Cost
Community Garden Development	\$300.00	24	\$7,200.00
Family Culinary Creations	\$150.00	12	\$1,800.00
Needlecraft Circle	\$30.00	24	\$720.00
Family Movie Night	\$30.00	24	\$720.00
All Ages Programs			\$10,440.00

The first of these programs, Community Garden Development, holds great importance to the rebuilding of the community. The annual budget for these biweekly sessions is \$7,200.00, which will account for the tools and seeds needed to grow fruits and vegetables. This program will provide for those that are suffering after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and promote a sense of community across our patrons. It will also benefit the Family Culinary Creations program, since some of the fruits and vegetables grown within the garden can be used as ingredients.

The Family Culinary Creations program will occur once a month, with an annual budget of \$1,800.00. This program is of great importance during this time, as it will provide access to food security and education for the community. The price of ingredients and necessary culinary tools can have a massive impact on food security, so this program will help those struggling while also providing a fun space to learn.

The Needlecraft Circle is the next program, with a much smaller annual budget of \$720.00 for its biweekly sessions. This cheaper program allows for the inclusion of some of the higher price programs while still supplying a useful and engaging resource for patrons. Providing snacks during programs such as this also enables us to ensure that members of our community have access to nutrition and a positive environment.

The last program of this type is a family movie night which will also happen biweekly, with an annual budget of \$720.00. This, again, enables the allocation of funds go to larger

projects while still providing to our community members on a smaller scale. With the family focus, we want to ensure that all groups feel welcomed and wanted in the space.

The second general allotment is for adult-centered programs, which have been allocated an overall annual budget of \$532,290.00 for a combined total of 124⁷ sessions. While this price is significantly higher than the all-ages and youth services programming, it contains three of our four most vital programs and will provide the adults in the community with resources and opportunities to help themselves and the people around them.

Table 16: Adult Program Allotments

Programs	Est. Cost/Session	Frequency (Times/Yr)	Total Program Cost
Community Disaster Clean-Up/Community Aid Information	\$10,165.00	52	\$528,580.00
Digital Literacy	\$1,310.00	1*	\$1,310.00
Local History Preservation	\$100.00	24	\$2,400.00
Job Preparedness/Job Help	\$0.00	24	\$0.00
Adult Programs			\$532,290.00

The most expensive adult-oriented program we have planned, and the first of our vital programs, is Community Disaster Clean-Up and Aid Information, which has been allotted \$528,580.00 for its weekly sessions. This program will not remain such a high priority after its first year, but while the city and its communities get back on their feet, it is vital that we step forward in helping everyone get there. The next program for adults is Digital Literacy, the second of our four most important programs. It is a biweekly program that has been allotted \$1,310.00 that will be used to teach and encourage patrons on the importance of becoming digitally informed. The third is Local History Preservation. This will happen biweekly with the budget of \$2,400.00.

The final adult-centered program is Job Preparedness. Happening biweekly, it has been

⁷ The budget spreadsheet labels Digital Literacy as 1 session due to the restriction of annual subscriptions, there will be 24 sessions, occurring biweekly.

designated as a cost-free program, receiving a budget of \$0.00 as all resources and help can be provided at no cost. Being there for our patrons as they step back into the workforce or attempt to change jobs will provide the ability for these members to take these crucial steps in their journeys.

The final general programming category is youth services programming. These programs are either designed for children of all ages or have a particular teen focus. The youth services programs have been allocated a budget of \$5,480.00, with a total of 96 regular sessions and a Summer Reading Program. We want to provide not only a space for kids and teens, but useful resources and enjoyment for them within this space.

Table 17: Youth Services Allotments

Programs	Est. Cost/Session	Frequency (Times/Yr)	Total Program Cost
Kids' Summer Reading	\$2,000.00	1	\$2,000.00
Teen Book Club	\$30.00	12	\$360.00
Bead Art for Teens	\$30.00	12	\$360.00
Reproductive Health Resources	\$40.00	12	\$480
Children's Story Time	\$60.00	24	\$1,440.00
Children's Lego Competition	\$15.00	12	\$180.00
Children's Craft Day	\$50.00	12	\$600.00
Library Scavenger Hunt	\$5.00	12	\$60.00
Youth Services Programs			\$5,480.00

The Summer Reading Program is the last of our four vital programs. It will have a budget of \$2,000.00 divided across all of the resources and materials needed to achieve this two-month long program. This program will be one of the first to get started after the Alvar Street Branch reopens and will welcome the children back into the space with a fun and rewarding time.

The next program is the Teens Book Club, which will meet once a month. The annual budget for this program is \$360.00, which will cover the snacks and drinks that will be provided as an incentive and another way to help any community members who might be struggling with food. The books will come at no cost as they will be provided through our interlibrary loan

system. The goal of this program is to encourage teens to read and engage with each other in a way that feels like their own.

The next program designed for teens is Bead Art for Teens. This monthly program has an annual allotment of \$360.00. It will provide a creative outlet for teens and a way to connect with one another, regardless of their backgrounds or personal struggles.

The final teen-focused program is Reproductive Health Resources. It will meet once a month with an annual budget of \$480.00. The goal of this program is to create a safe space for our teens and allow them the opportunity to learn and ask questions about their reproductive health because we believe an educated teen is better equipped to make decisions. By bringing in speakers, we provide the teens in our community with direct access to experts and the best information sources.

Moving into children's focused programming, Children's Story Time will occur biweekly, with an annual budget of \$1,440. This is another program with a budget focused on providing food for kids coming into our space who might not have other regular access to nutrition. Librarians and volunteers will provide kids with an enjoyable time within the library and introduce them to a love of stories.

The Children's Lego Competition Program will run once a month with an annual budget of \$180.00. Legos will already be available within the library, as they have been designated within the Collections Development budget. The small budget provided for this program is to include a small prize given to the winner of the competition each month to incentivize participation and to give back to the community in a small way. The program provides fun for kids while also allowing creativity, problem solving, and engineering.

Children's Craft Day will be put on monthly and has an annual budget of \$600.00. The

goal of this program is to provide a new craft each month to act as a constantly changing experience for the kids. Those unable to attend can pick up a bag from the library any time during the month to ensure that all members of the community who wish to participate, regardless of scheduling conflicts or other struggles, can be included.

The final children's program is a Library Scavenger Hunt that will happen once a month. The annual budget is \$60.00. As a low budget program, this scavenger hunt allows kids to explore the library and learn about different resources provided. This is also a moment to promote other programs happening at the library via clues or themes that can match with whatever we wish to promote that month.

Overall, this baseline for library programming at the Alvar Street Branch will be key to its successful return as a critical part of the community. Through the varied experiences and resources provided across the library's programs, the Alvar Street Branch will create a sense of unity and togetherness in the face of tragedy.

Systems

The Systems budget segment consists of the various digital systems that will be used in the daily operations of the Alvar Street Branch and their costs. These systems are vital for carrying out essential library tasks and making the library an accessible space for patrons.

Table 18: Systems Budget Breakdown

System	Purpose	Cost/Unit	Quantity	Total Annual Cost
Koha Library Software	Open-Source Catalog	\$0.00	1	\$0.00
Hotspot Connections	User Internet Connections	\$40.00	12	\$480.00
Microsoft Office Business Standard	Operating Systems	\$150.00	18	\$2,700.00
Norton Small Business Premium (Up to 10 Users)	Cybersecurity	\$399.99	2	\$799.98
Total Systems Budget				\$3,979.98

For the purpose of cost-efficiency, we have elected to use the Koha Community Koha Library Software, as it is an open-source library catalog software available free of charge (2025).

Their mission aligns very much with our goals in the NOPL of providing access to all patrons and supporting the diverse needs of communities. The Koha Library Software is compatible with MARC, UNIMARC, z39.50, SRU/SW, SIP2, and SIP/NCIP standards, making it operable across a number of other systems and its circulation, management, and self-checkout interfaces are all XHTML, CSS, and JavaScript compliant as well (2025). The Koha system also has a “No Vendor Lock-In policy,” meaning that the NOPL will be able to switch to a different system at any time fairly easily should the need arise (2025). We will also be purchasing 12 hotspot connections for \$40 each in order to support the internet usage needs of our patrons and staff (M. Robertson, personal communication, February 20, 2025).

The Alvar Street Branch will purchase two annual subscriptions for Norton Small Business Premium at \$399.99 each, as the NOPL is dedicated to protecting the privacy of its patrons, “helping people of all ages make the most of the Internet and become information literate” (Norton, 2025; 2021). The annual cost of this software will be \$799.98. In purchasing this antivirus, we aim to ensure the digital safety of our patrons as they interact with and learn about the digital space. We also intend to purchase an annual subscription to Microsoft Office Business Standard⁸ for 18 users at \$150.00 per user, in order to ensure that the library staff and patrons at each workstation are able to access this software. This will result in an annual cost of \$2,700.00 for all user stations. Overall, these systems will receive a total annual budget of \$3,979.98.

Miscellaneous Operations

The Miscellaneous Operations segment of the budget consists of materials that contribute to the annual operating costs of the library that have not been previously categorized. This

⁸ In a real-world scenario, we would utilize Microsoft 365 Government G3, but access to pricing models for this requires interfacing directly with Microsoft via numerous official forms to confirm eligibility.

includes cleaning supplies, office supplies, appliances, newspaper subscriptions, and the one-time bulk book delivery cost. These expenses are essential for the daily tasks of library staff and provide critical additional resources for patrons.

Table 19: Miscellaneous Operations Budget Breakdown

Miscellaneous	Total Annual Budget
Cleaning Supplies	\$8,000
Office Supplies	\$8,000
Appliances	\$5,000
Collections Bulk Delivery	\$10,000
Newspaper Delivery Subscriptions	\$1,200
Local History Archives	\$50,000
Total Miscellaneous Operations Budget	\$82,200

The bulk delivery of the 16,825 collection materials is estimated to require 650 cubic-foot-boxes and cost around \$10,000 (S. Marshall, personal communication, February 14, 2025). This expenditure is a one-time cost and will not be a part of the annual budget moving forward.

The largest budgetary allocation in this section, set at \$50,000, is the appropriation for the Local History Archives. This fund will be used by the resident archivist to establish a small archive in the Alvar Street Branch in collaboration with members of the greater New Orleans community. This archive will be dedicated to preserving and maintaining historic materials specific to the Ninth Ward and New Orleans' history. The size of the allotment for this particular budget is intended to finance the purchase of the materials and equipment necessary to establish and maintain this archive. Its allotment will be reassessed in the following year, once the archive has been established.

The next largest expenditure allotments are cleaning and office supplies, which will need to be continuously replenished as critical materials for the daily operations of the library. Cleaning supplies may include brooms, gloves, mops, rags, disinfectant wipes, vacuums, and more. The cleanliness of all surfaces, materials, and spaces is critical to keeping our community safe from the spread of germs and disease. Office supplies will include copy paper, folders,

binders, staplers, and stationery, among other materials. Both sets of supplies have been allocated \$8,000 for the year. The general appliances annual allotment is \$5,000, and it accounts for the purchase of a microwave, fridge, coffee maker, and other appliances needed for staff and patron usage. This annual expense also considers the gradual need to replace these appliances as they age.

Part of the NOPL's mission is to be "a major information source" for New Orleanians and to provide a "broad and relevant collection of materials" (2024b). The following newspaper subscriptions have been chosen due to their popularity, their reputations as sources of news, and to offer patrons options in the subscriptions they'd like to peruse: New York Times, the Advocate, Wall St. Journal, USA Today. Annual costs have been calculated for each newspaper: NYT at \$300, the Advocate at \$311, the Wall St. Journal at \$444, and USA Today \$140. The combined cost of these subscriptions has been rounded up to an annual allotment of \$1,200.

The overall appropriation of expenses for Miscellaneous Operations is \$82,000. These costs are largely annual allotments, as the purpose of most of them is to account for standard operational costs.

Conclusion

Based on our calculations for resources and materials that the NOPL considers vital to fostering a well-informed, organized, and literate community, our team has determined the budget proposed above to be sufficient in meeting the needs of the Alvar Street Branch's renovation and operations through its first fiscal year. As New Orleans begins to heal, the Alvar Street Branch library will lead the way for other branches of the NOPL to begin reconstructing their own resources and spaces. We feel this team has identified a realistic budget that will meet the timeline provided to us in order to have the library reopened by the time of next year's ALA

annual conference in New Orleans.

A lot of research went into creating this budget, including seeking advice from seasoned professionals in their respective fields, who share similar goals and motivations. We would like to thank the following professionals for their contributions:

- ❖ Cheyenne Spink, Store Manager, B&N Fairfax, Store 2937
- ❖ Mike Robertson, IT Manager, North Madison County Public Library System
- ❖ Rinna V. Rem, Alvar St Branch Manager
- ❖ Shawn Marshall, Store Manager, B&N Manassas, Store 3493
- ❖ Tori Walser, Youth Services Manager, Elwood Public Library

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