

# Welcome to the PARKWAY CENTRAL LIBRARY







Use this guide  
to explore one of  
the world's finest  
public libraries on  
your own.

## Parkway Central Library

Monday through Thursday  
9:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

Friday  
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Saturday  
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Sunday  
1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

**1901 Vine Street**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19103**  
**215-686-5322**

*Hours of individual departments  
and collections vary. Consult the  
website for details.*

   @freelibrary | [freelibrary.org](https://www.freelibrary.org)



Stone carvers from the John Donnelly Company completing Corinthian capitals, c. 1924–25

## BUILDING HISTORY

### The Original 1927 Building

Designed by **JULIAN ABELE**, a prominent African American architect from Philadelphia who worked in Horace Trumbauer's firm, the Parkway Central Library first opened its doors on June 2, 1927. As an anchor cultural and educational institution on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Parkway Central sees over 1 million visits each year from the city, its countryside, and around the world. Our visitors come to learn from our public events, to consult our special collections, and to tap into the expertise of our librarians and curators in each of the subject departments and special collections. On most days, volunteer docents offer architectural walks through the building.

### Renovations to Abele's Book Stacks

Architect **MOSHE SAFDIE**, in consultation with librarians, has transformed the high-density book storage system at the heart of Abele's design into flexible learning and working spaces. The deep research collections that were within are now retrievable from our modern Regional Operations Center upon a click of a button in one business day in most cases.

**By appointment:** Our librarians offer orientations to the intellectual arrangement of the building, as well as organized lessons and activities for schools, universities, and other communities of learning.

## Ground Floor

---

Follow the little footprints to begin your explorations where many Philadelphians begin their experience of the Parkway Central Library: in the **CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT**. Programming varies from storytimes for our littlest learners to homework help for adolescents. From board books to graphic novels, children of all ages will find books guaranteed to captivate. Adults and children alike will enjoy our collection of vintage Children's Book Week posters lining the hallways as well as the original artworks hanging throughout the department that illustrate famous children's books.

**MONTGOMERY AUDITORIUM** is a 378-seat lecture hall and performance stage that hosts our award-winning Author Event Series, our Teen Author Series, and numerous ad hoc performances, lectures, film screenings, and more, organized by our subject department librarians.

**By appointment:** The **CHILDREN'S LITERATURE RESEARCH COLLECTION (CLRC)** is an invaluable resource for individual researchers and classes with an interest in the history, study, and development of children's literature. The CLRC houses over 85,000 noncirculating items from the 1830s through the present in several distinct collections.

Opened in April 2019, the **MARIE AND JOSEPH FIELD TEEN CENTER** is a 4,000-square-foot teens-only activity, media, and study space. The Field Teen Center includes a robust library of young-adult fiction and nonfiction, a flexible maker studio, group study rooms, plus regular activities and events.

The **BUSINESS RESOURCE AND INNOVATION CENTER (BRIC)** offers an extensive collection of print resources and databases for entrepreneurs,

small-business owners, inventors, and nonprofits, as well as business workshops and networking events. The BRIC contains numerous specialized library services and collections. The **PATENT AND TRADEMARK RESOURCE CENTER (PTRC)** within the BRIC is one of three in the state of Pennsylvania designated by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to support the public with trademarks and patents. Librarians in the PTRC can demonstrate search techniques, direct users to information, and explain the application process. The BRIC's **WORKPLACE** assists job seekers in gaining the tools necessary to find work. The **REGIONAL FOUNDATION CENTER** provides local nonprofit organizations with free access to information and workshops on management, grant seeking, fund development, and proposal writing. *Appointments are highly recommended.*

**Behind the scenes:** Administrative offices for our Information Technology unit and our citywide Youth Services and Programming Division are also located on this level.

## First Floor

---



**PHILBRICK HALL** is our beautifully restored fiction and popular culture library and central circulation department. Thousands of Philadelphians every year sign up for their first library cards here. Library users can also access the **INTERLIBRARY LOAN DEPARTMENT (ILL)** at the information desk. ILL helps Philadelphians borrow library materials and research articles not owned by the Free Library from cooperating libraries across the continental United States.





The **MUSIC DEPARTMENT** is a conservatory-quality music library serving musicians and music fans of all ages and skill levels. It lends chamber music part sets and musical instruments, and has a sheet-music collection spanning the entire history of music publishing in North America. The department's listening stations may be used to enjoy any of the tens of thousands of reference recordings on CD and LP, spanning the entire history of music. Its **DRINKER LIBRARY OF CHORAL MUSIC** is a collection of over 900 works of sacred and secular music for choral performances, which circulate to member ensembles around the globe. To become a member, contact [drinkerlibrary@freelibrary.org](mailto:drinkerlibrary@freelibrary.org).



**Appointments recommended:** The **EDWIN A. FLEISHER COLLECTION OF ORCHESTRAL MUSIC**—the world's largest lending library of orchestral performance part sets—offers more than 21,000 titles and is a significant center for research into the professional lives of composers and conductors of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The **GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT (GPD)** is the largest depository of federal, state, and municipal publications in the metropolitan area. As renovations proceed in the GPD's former space, researchers can still tap the collection and the expertise of librarians from the Social Science and History Department on the Second Floor. A selection of the department's extensive holdings of publications are stored in this room.

**CENTRAL SENIOR SERVICES** organizes a rich menu of compelling and intellectually challenging programs for older adults. It offers a comfortable lounge for seniors to access computers and leisure reading. One-on-one computer tutoring for those ages 50 and above is available by appointment.

**THE ROBERT AND EILEEN KENNEDY HEIM CENTER FOR CULTURAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT** is a flexible atrium for lively engagement and interaction, intellectual discourse, and grassroots problem solving. Librarians, professionals from our Division of Cultural and Civic Engagement, and community members themselves activate this center with opportunities to learn about and shape the society that our library serves.

**Behind the scenes:** The main administrative offices for the Free Library system and Parkway Central line the western end of the building.

## Second Floor

---

The **SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HISTORY DEPARTMENT (SSH)** achieves what the name implies: a library dedicated to linking all of the social science disciplines with the study of history and geography. It also holds significant collections of books on sports, games, travel, and true crime. Researchers can also access the expertise of the **GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS** librarians and the **NEWSPAPER RESEARCH** librarians from this reference desk.

**By appointment:** The **MAP COLLECTION** houses the most comprehensive collection of maps and geographically related reference sources in the Philadelphia area. Within the collection can be found over 130,000 current and historical maps covering every area of the world; hundreds of reference sources in the fields of cartography, cartobibliography, geography, and place names; and a collection of international city plans. The collection is especially strong in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania maps and atlases.

The **SCIENCE AND WELLNESS DEPARTMENT** serves students, researchers, the curious, and hobbyists in finding and accessing information on health, the natural sciences, technology, hobbies, home economics, labor, and the trades.

The **EDUCATION, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION DEPARTMENT (EPR)** collects print and electronic information on a broad spectrum of education, philosophy, religion, psychology, and librarianship topics. College financial-aid information, test-preparation material, and vocational-technical information are all available here. The **LANGUAGES AND LEARNING CENTER**, a project of EPR, assists English language learners, low-literate adults, learners of other languages, and the

educators of those groups in accessing materials and programs that support the acquisition and growth of language and literacy skills.

The **LITERATURE DEPARTMENT** contains over 100,000 books on many topics, including literary theory, literary criticism, poetry, drama, essays, biographies of writers, folklore, journalism, dictionaries, and works on language and linguistics, as well as foreign literature in translation. It also has the largest Shakespeare collection in Pennsylvania, as well as an extensive collection of modern drama.

The **ART DEPARTMENT** maintains a comprehensive collection of over 60,000 books on the fine arts, architecture, garden design, interior design, fashion, graphic arts, crafts, collectibles, and photography. Librarians maintain a rich set of files on artists, architects, designers, and collectors, as well as on the art and architecture of Philadelphia. Exhibitions of work by local artist groups or materials from our collections are always on display in the hallway galleries.

**By appointment:** The **PRINT AND PICTURE COLLECTION** is home to diverse collections of fine-art prints, photographs, drawings, and artists' books, as well as extensive research collections of Philadelphia images, both historical and modern.

The **NEWSPAPERS AND MICROFILM CENTER** is our region's largest collection of newspapers from the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Over 400 Philadelphia newspapers, dating back to 1720, are on microfilm. Our collection includes newspapers from major cities around the world and local community papers, as well as microfilm versions of academic, underground, and trade periodicals collected by the subject departments. Students and other curious minds should begin their research process by inquiring within the Social Science and History Department.

### Third Floor

---

The **RARE BOOK DEPARTMENT** offers free access to rotating exhibitions of historically important books, manuscripts, and works of art from 3,000 BCE to today. Among its collections are illuminated medieval manuscripts and cuttings; first editions, letters, and manuscripts of important writers, including some of the largest collections of Charles Dickens and Edgar Allan Poe; nearly 50,000 early American children's

books; original artwork by Beatrix Potter, Robert Lawson, and other illustrators; Mughal court paintings; and Pennsylvania German fraktur, manuscripts, and printed books. For a deeper look at these extraordinary collections, take the 11:00 a.m. tour, offered Monday through Saturday.

**By appointment:** The **THEATRE COLLECTION** contains information on theater, motion pictures, television, radio, variety shows, the circus, and other forms of popular entertainment. A major focus is Philadelphia's theatrical history. It holds over 1 million books, magazines, playbills, photographs, posters, film and stage stills, reviews, clipping files, and memorabilia. Some material dates back to the 19th century.

**By appointment:** Educators interested in class visits and researchers interested in consulting works held in the Rare Book Department or the Theatre Collection should contact the department at [erefrbd@freelibrary.org](mailto:erefrbd@freelibrary.org) to schedule an appointment.

### Fourth Floor

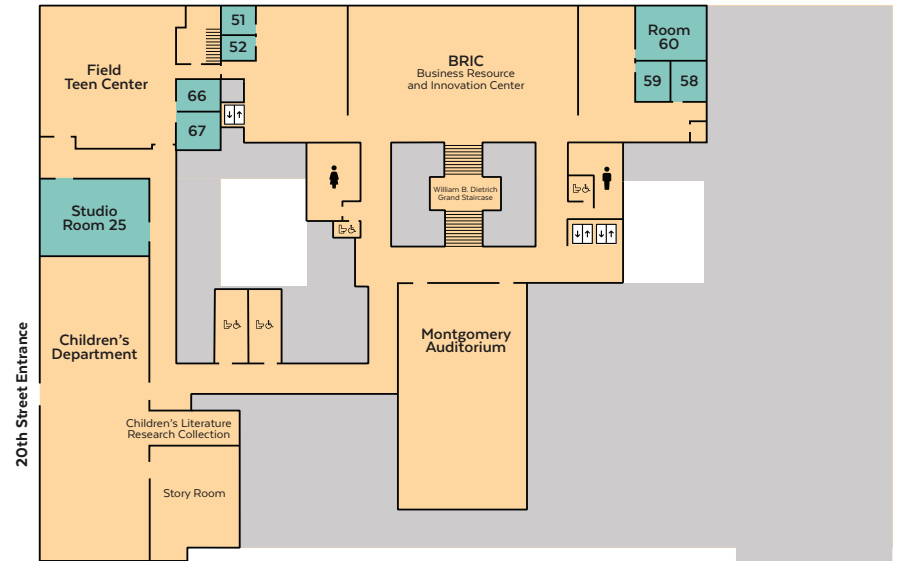
---

The Fourth Floor primarily consists of event spaces and meeting rooms open to the public for scheduled library programs. Our Skyline Terrace incorporates one of the first municipal green roofs in Philadelphia. The Fourth Floor is also the home of the **CULINARY LITERACY CENTER (CLC)**, a commercial-grade kitchen that services as a classroom and educational dining space. The first of its kind in any library in the country, the CLC has a mission to advance literacy through food and cooking around a communal table.

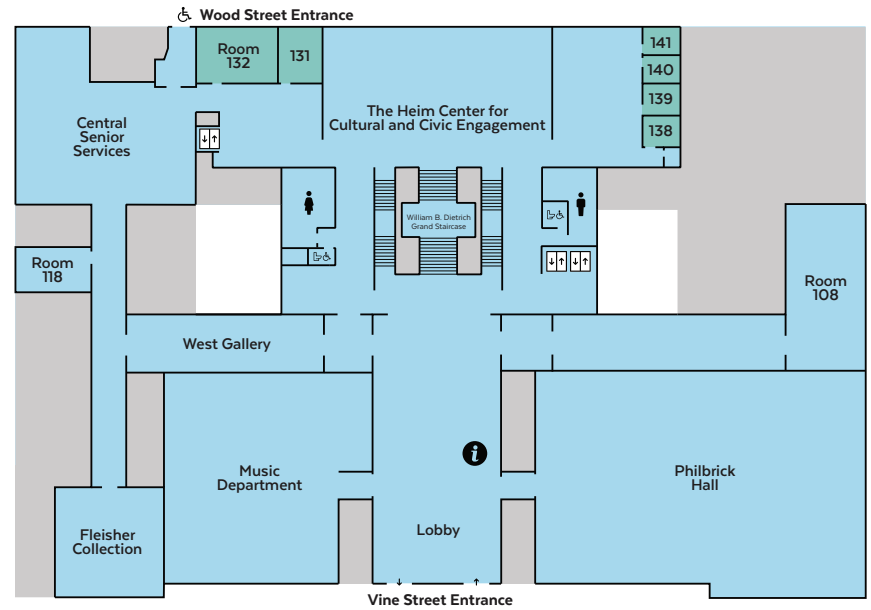


# PARKWAY CENTRAL LIBRARY FLOORPLANS

## GROUND FLOOR

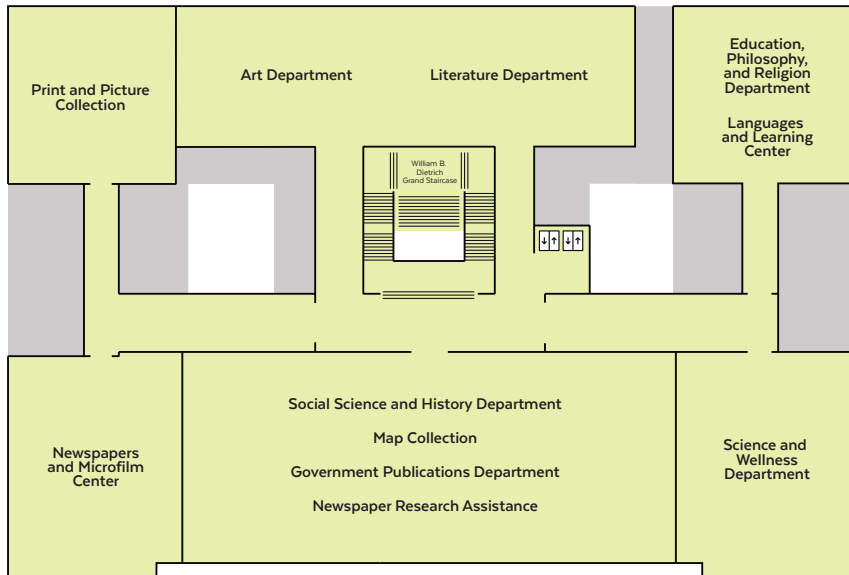


## FIRST FLOOR

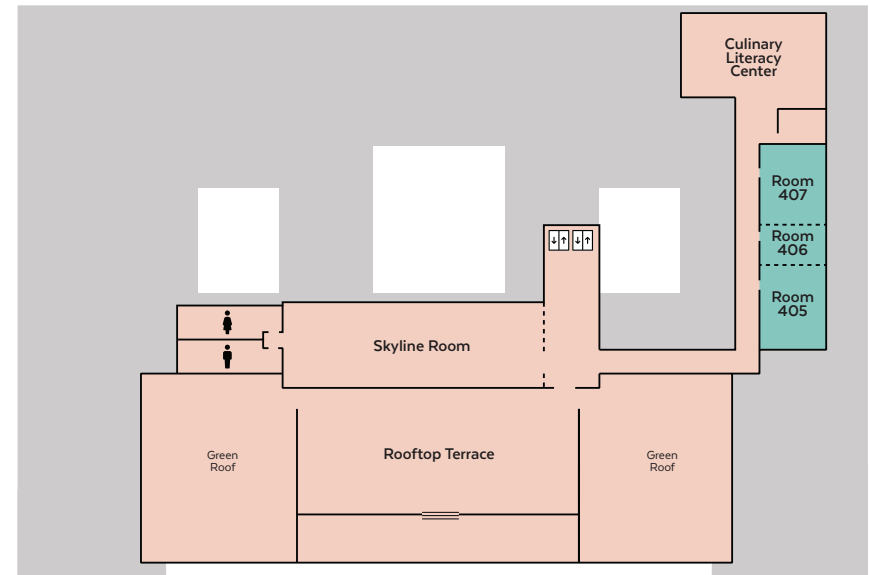




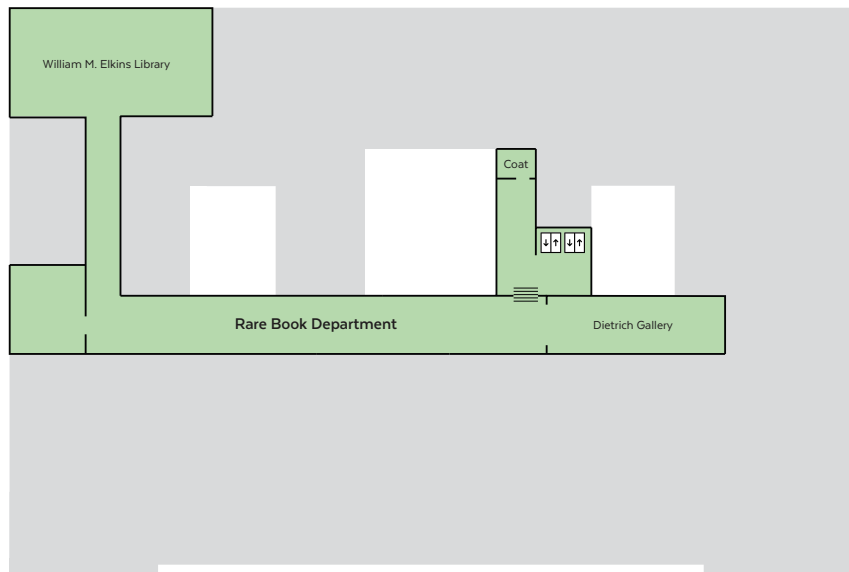
## SECOND FLOOR



## FOURTH FLOOR



## THIRD FLOOR



Looking for the perfect location for your next special event or business meeting?

The distinctive Parkway Central Library has many flexible event spaces to accommodate your needs. Visit [freelibrary.org](https://freelibrary.org) for details and a list of available spaces.

## Rare and Special Collections

NAME OF COLLECTION	ACCESS LOCATION	HOURS	CONTACT
<b>Chamber Music Collection</b>	Music Department (FLOOR 1)	All public hours***	215-686-5316 chambermusic@freelibrary.org
<b>Children's Literature Research Collection</b>	Children's Department (GROUND FLOOR)	Mon-Fri* 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.	215-686-5382 clrc@freelibrary.org
<b>Drinker Library of Choral Music</b>	Music Department (FLOOR 1)	Mon-Fri*** 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.	215-686-5364 drinkerlibrary@freelibrary.org
<b>Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music</b>	Music Department (FLOOR 1)	Mon-Fri* 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.	215-686-5313 fleisher@freelibrary.org
<b>Map Collection</b>	FLOOR 2	Mon-Fri* 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.	215-686-5397 erefmap@freelibrary.org
<b>Patent and Trademark Resource Center</b>	Business Resource and Innovation Center (GROUND FLOOR)	All public hours**	freelibrary.org/bric
<b>Print and Picture Collection</b>	FLOOR 2	Mon-Fri* 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.	215-686-5405 erefpix@freelibrary.org
<b>Rare Book Department</b> <i>Galleries open to public Reading room (Mon-Fri) by appointment only</i>	FLOOR 3	Mon-Sat 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.	215-686-5416 erefrbd@freelibrary.org
<b>Regional Foundation Center</b>	Business Resource and Innovation Center (GROUND FLOOR)	All public hours**	freelibrary.org/bric
<b>Sheet Music Collection</b>	Music Department (FLOOR 1)	All public hours***	215-686-5316 erefmus@freelibrary.org
<b>Theatre Collection</b>	FLOOR 3	Mon-Fri* 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.	215-686-5427 erefthc@freelibrary.org

\* by appointment only

\*\* appointment recommended

\*\*\* ask Music Department librarians for assistance



# SUPPORT THE FREE LIBRARY

at [freelibrary.org/support](https://freelibrary.org/support)

or by letting your government representatives know how important library services are to you and your community.

For literary gifts and souvenirs, visit our virtual gift shop at [freelibraryshop.org](https://freelibraryshop.org).



**Free**  
**LIBRARY OF**  
**PHILADELPHIA**

1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215-686-5322

[freelibrary.org](http://freelibrary.org)