



MORRISSON-REEVES LIBRARY

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2027



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# WELCOME

We're pleased and excited to introduce the Morrisson-Reeves Library 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. This Plan will serve as the keystone for our Board of Trustees and Library Director, as we look toward the future of MRL and remain steady in our vision to be a vibrant, vital community resource for imagination and growth.

Libraries are no longer just about books—at MRL you can learn to dance the salsa, receive free legal advice, use the Zoom Room to have an online job interview, or even borrow a cake pan. We see MRL as a community hub, a place where anybody and everybody can discover and connect with resources, inspiration, and infinite opportunities. We created this Plan with that philosophy in mind, and to challenge ourselves to think big and focus on the outcome: to help every member of our community to live their best life.

The timing of this Strategic Plan has also inspired our approach. With significant changes at MRL under new leadership, along with continued post-Covid adjustments and discoveries, we see this Plan as a tool to leverage this transitional phase. We've taken advantage of this moment to pause and reevaluate, take in community and stakeholder feedback, and envision the future of MRL.

Within this Plan you'll find five Pillars that provide the foundation for that future: Community Connected; Team Investment; Inspiring Growth; Resource Hub; and Operational Success. Each Pillar represents a unique facet of MRL's focus related to how best to grow and lead within the community. The Plan also weaves Diversity, Equity and Inclusion throughout, as better understanding how to connect, engage and serve all of our residents remains a priority for MRL.

We appreciate every stakeholder and resident that took the time to fill out a survey, attend a listening session or participate in a focus group. We thank the Tactical Team, Development Team, and Stratavize Consulting for their valuable efforts that led to the creation of this Plan. Your engagement represents your commitment to every member of this community and to the continued success of Morrisson-Reeves Library. Thank you.



*Jennifer Lewis*

**Jennifer Lewis,**  
Board President



*Dena Little*

**Dena Little,**  
Director

# ABOUT US

Morrisson-Reeves Library exists to support, uplift, and empower. We do this by connecting people to resources, being accessible, and maintaining relevant resources, services, and collections of materials for our community.

## Our Mission:

To connect people to information, inspiration, and infinite opportunities.

## Our Vision:

Be a vibrant, vital community resource for imagination and growth.

The development team identified and recognized guiding principles that will help us achieve our goals. These principles (or “behaviors”) define our identity and shape our interactions with the community we serve.

We will be integrating these behaviors and characteristics over the next five years as we pursue excellence. We will learn to embrace adaptability. We will keep teamwork at our core. Resourcefulness will drive us to creatively tackle challenges. Leadership will empower us to model strength and inclusivity for our community. Compassion will underscore every interaction. Our dedication to perseverance will ensure that we apply steady, continued effort to achieve our goals.

These characteristics form the foundation of our commitment to bettering the lives of our community members and enriching the fabric of our shared journey.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:



### Teamwork:

Support each other, act together as a unit, and encourage each person to contribute towards the interests of our shared purpose.



### Leadership:

Approach situations with ownership, integrity, self-awareness, and an eye towards empowering one another. We value our unique strengths and perspectives and recognize what we model for others.



### Adaptability:

Be prepared to adjust to different conditions, willing to change as circumstances require, and flexible in thinking and problem solving.



### Compassion:

Respond with kindness, consideration and empathy to those we serve, and each other, while acting with a willingness to help when possible.



### Resourcefulness:

Deal creatively with challenges by devising new ways of using existing resources and skills.



### Perseverance:

Use steady continued effort to achieve our goals, especially in the face of obstacles, failures, or discouragement.

# OUR ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

It was important to our strategic planning process to ensure stakeholders and members of the community had a chance to communicate what was important to them as we planned for our future. We collected data from March through June of 2023. The process collected qualitative and quantitative research. The surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions were designed to gain important insight, opinions, and perspective from staff, patrons, local organizations, and community members. We're pleased to report that Morrisson-Reeves Library collected input from 1,114 diverse individuals across Wayne County as part of our strategic planning process.




**4**  
months of  
data collection



**1**  
community stakeholder  
listening session



**1**  
internal survey



**1**  
external survey



**8**  
community  
focus groups



**3**  
employee  
listening sessions

**ENG  
ES**  
Survey  
options  
in English  
& Spanish



Over  
**1,100**  
survey  
responses



Quantitative  
data  
collected

Qualitative  
data  
collected



# DATA DISCOVERY

As a library and community hub, data influences the work that we do. This data includes everything from the people we serve to the needs of the community. We use this data to evaluate our current performance and develop plans to improve for the future.

Here's what we learned:

## COMMUNITY

Consistently, participants recommend that MRL be more visible in the community, with a focus on outreach, partnerships, and providing services beyond library walls.

## TEAM

MRL team members ranked “Opportunities to work and collaborate across service areas” as the #1 most valued element of their career with MRL. An area that many members of the MRL team shared that needed greater focus was increased communication about developmental goals, progress and expectations, with increased recognition of achievements.

## SERVICES

76% of survey respondents ranked social engagement as either Extremely Important or Somewhat Important. Although 95% of survey respondents agreed that the library is conveniently located, many non-users or infrequent visitors are seeking greater convenience discovering and accessing the services we provide.

## RESOURCES

60% of respondents ranked literacy and equitable access to reading materials, and increasing diverse representation in the materials we offer, as the most important core service priorities for MRL for the next 5 years. Many survey and in-person respondents provided feedback suggesting that MRL create flexible space, both indoors and outdoors, to promote a more welcoming atmosphere, social engagement, inclusivity, and community connection.

## OPERATIONS

Many responders, both in-person and via survey, shared a desire for services and resources that MRL already provides. This highlights that we need to increase our focus on how we communicate and connect with the community, to best match library resources with the residents we serve.

As an organization, we're incredibly proud of the volume of feedback we received. All this data has been used to inform the strategic plan you will see in later pages of this document.

# OUR NORTH STAR

It's more than books. It's more than story time sessions or internet searches. Libraries empower communities and connect people to resources. They educate. They bridge the digital divide. They broaden horizons. They ask questions. They find solutions. Libraries are uniquely positioned to inspire the public and leave a positive impact on the people they serve. More than ever, libraries are viewed as a community hub – as a connector to resources, information, aid, and social relationships.

## We will be that hub for the community.

Our plan is for Morrison-Reeves Library to become the hub that connects and touches every part of our community: local leaders, families, teens, the elderly, early readers, people in need of support and connection, and more. In a constantly evolving world, our library seeks to maintain a deep connection with our residents, understand their ever-changing needs, and respond with programs, workshops, and services to meet them where they are today. We will be the cornerstone of knowledge, growth, inclusivity, and enrichment so that residents can reach their full potential.





# OUR STRATEGIES

We've made improvements since our last strategic plan was revealed and now it is time to set our sights on how we will achieve our next set of improvements to become the go-to hub for resources in our community. These strategies will hold us accountable and inform the public of the important things we plan to accomplish over the next few years.

## **Resource Hub:**

We will be the cornerstone of knowledge, growth, inclusivity, and enrichment for Richmond and Wayne County residents. Our vision is to become a vibrant, vital community resource for imagination and growth. We are the place to access local history information, materials to advance a career, to challenge thinking, and more.

## **Inspiring Growth:**

We will commit to living out our mission of connecting people to information, inspiration, and infinite opportunities. In a constantly evolving world, our library seeks to maintain a deep connection with our residents, understanding their ever-changing needs and responding to them with programs, workshops, and services that inspire.

## **Community Connected:**

We will become an integral part of the communities we serve. We recognize that a library's true strength isn't only within its walls but also in our ability to connect and interact with residents where they are—making our resources and services more accessible and equitable for all.

## **Team Investment:**

We will invest in and nurture our talent. Our team is the foundation of our patrons' experience, and we are committed to fostering an environment where we attract a diverse talent pool, and all can flourish and develop skills and capacities to benefit our professional identity.

## **Operational Success:**

We will embody our responsibility to achieve excellence in all operations. Our responsibility is to operate from a place of future sustainability and investment while managing our internal operations well.

As you read through the specific pillars on the following pages, keep the following in mind: we define goals as what we want to accomplish over the coming years. Our objectives are how we will set about accomplishing our goals. The outcomes are the changes we hope to see in the community, our patrons, and ourselves. The metrics are how we will measure our work.



# PILLAR 1: RESOURCE HUB

Our “Resource Hub” pillar embodies our unwavering commitment to be the cornerstone of knowledge, growth, inclusivity, and enrichment for Richmond and Wayne County residents. Our vision is to become a vibrant, vital community resource for imagination and growth. We are the place to access local history information, materials to advance a career, to challenge thinking, and more.

**Goal 1:** Curate a diverse collection of physical and digital materials to inspire, educate, and feed our patron's unique interests.

**Objective 1.1:** Develop and maintain a collection and resource evaluation process that aims to continuously address and incorporate changing needs.

**Objective 1.2:** Offer transparency in collection and resource management so that patrons and our team understand the why behind our decisions.

**Objective 1.3:** Pursue resource sharing opportunities with other agencies as a way of expanding our offerings.

**Objective 1.4:** Reduce collection access barriers to create an inclusive and equitable experience for all patrons.

**Goal 2:** Meet the community's technology needs to ensure equitable access for all.

**Objective 2.1:** Regularly assess the community's needs and acquire adaptive, accessible, and relevant technology.

**Objective 2.2:** Budget for new technologies and technology replacement and staff training.

**Objective 2.3:** Use data-driven decision-making to evaluate and plan resource distribution.

**Goal 3:** Maintain a welcoming and adaptable space that can satisfy the diverse and varied needs of the community and team members.

**Objective 3.1:** Continually work to improve patrons and team experience through purposefully designed and functional spaces.

**Objective 3.2:** Enhance the look, feel, and usability of the building's interior and exterior so that patrons have a sense of belonging.

**Objective 3.3:** Identify opportunities for and implement ways to foster social interaction and creative ways to use the space in the library.

## OUTCOMES

We will know we have accomplished our goals when we see:

- We are recognized as a community hub.
- The library building and its resources are well used by the whole community.
- A sense of pride and connection to the community's history.
- Residents have improved digital literacy and technology-related skills.
- An appreciation for the library's role in personal growth.
- Trust and confidence in the library's collection policies, procedures, and management.
- Community members see themselves represented in the library's collections and offerings.

## METRICS

We will measure our actions and activities by tracking and monitoring the following:



**Usage of materials  
and collections**



**Usage of library space**



**Foot traffic to  
the library**



**Benchmarking**





# PILLAR 2: INSPIRING GROWTH

Our mission is to connect people to information, inspiration, and infinite opportunities. The "Inspiring Growth" pillar is our commitment to living out our mission. In a constantly evolving world, our library seeks to maintain a deep connection with our residents, understanding their ever-changing needs and responding to them with programs, workshops, and services that inspire.

**Goal 1:** Be an agile and adaptive organization so we can offer relevant services that meet the ever-changing needs of our community.

**Objective 1.1:** Offer ongoing feedback loops for residents and community partners to understand and respond to identified community needs.

**Objective 1.2:** Maintain an infrastructure to evaluate and then implement or discontinue services regularly.

**Objective 1.3:** Allocate resources to maintain existing services that are proving successful and adhere to library best practices.

**Goal 2:** Provide a diverse variety of programs, workshops, partnerships, and services to better serve more of our community.

**Objective 2.1:** Uncover and respond to the needs of our community, especially our underserved populations, ensuring everyone has a voice.

**Objective 2.2:** Actively seek, engage, and improve partnership opportunities to provide information and inspiration to more patrons

**Goal 3:** Play a supportive role in the success of local small businesses to help our community be a better place to live, learn, and work.

**Objective 3.1:** Refine our understanding of how best to serve the area's local businesses and entrepreneurs.

**Objective 3.2:** Strategically deploy library resources and services to meet identified needs of small businesses.

**Goal 4:** Provide exceptional patron experiences with consistently compassionate customer services to foster stronger connections between the library, patrons, and greater community.

**Objective 4.1:** Our team members will be cross-service area knowledgeable and compassionate to all people no matter their background or lived experience so they feel welcome, safe, seen, and heard.

**Objective 4.2:** Regularly evaluate the full entry-to-exit patron experience and adjust in response to the evaluation.

## OUTCOMES

We will know we have accomplished our goals when we see:

- Community needs are being met.
- MRL resources are used wisely.
- Everyone feels heard, seen, and represented through our services.
- Programs, workshops, and services meet the diverse interests of community members.

## METRICS

We will measure our actions and activities by tracking and monitoring the following:



**Number and variety of programs, workshops, and services**



**DEI representation in programs and services offered**



**Increase in traditionally non-library users attending programs, workshops, and services**



**Patron feedback**



**Program attendance and service usage**



**Customer Service evaluations**





Libros en español  
Spanish Language

R  
ROCKING HORSE

E

A

# PILLAR 3: COMMUNITY CONNECTED

The "Community Connected" pillar is our commitment to becoming an integral part of the communities we serve. We recognize that a library's true strength isn't only within its walls but also in our ability to connect and interact with residents where they are—making our resources and services more accessible and equitable for all.

**Goal 1:** Connect and interact with community and residents to meet them where they are by providing more equitable access to our resources and services.

**Objective 1.1:** Develop a variety of pathways for residents to engage with library services, resources, and programming.

**Objective 1.2:** Through a lens of accessibility pursue opportunities and methods for equitable engagement with diverse groups.

**Goal 2:** Actively engage with the community to raise awareness of library offerings to increase library usage across all demographics and socioeconomic status.

**Objective 2.1:** Our team members are visible in the community by strategically participating in events and activities to advocate for and promote library goals.

**Objective 2.2:** Identify non-library users to better understand and respond to their needs.

**Objective 2.3:** Participate as a stakeholder in community planning and organizational sessions to advance the library.

**Goal 3:** Forecast future opportunities to anticipate how best to leverage library resources.

**Objective 3.1:** Identify and use effective and diverse ways to gather community feedback.

**Objective 3.2:** Develop and maintain methods of tracking trends in relation to the library and community.

## OUTCOMES

We will know we have accomplished our goals when we see:

- A wide range of community members use library resources and services.
- People hear about our offerings from friends and family.
- People confidently engage with MRL to help improving their lives.
- MRL understands and is actively responding to the needs of the community.

## METRICS

We will measure our actions and activities by tracking and monitoring the following:



**Partnership advertising**



**Number of community engagement touchpoints**



**Foot traffic**



**Variety of community engagement touchpoints**



**Collection circulation**



**Social media engagement**



**Program attendance**



**Communications engagements**



**Number of card holders**







# Morrisson-Reeves Library



# PILLAR 4: TEAM INVESTMENT

The "Team Investment" pillar is founded on our promise to invest and nurture our talent. Our team is the foundation of our patrons' experience, and we are committed to fostering an environment where we attract a diverse talent pool, all can achieve success in their roles and develop skills and capacities to benefit our professional identity.

**Goal 1:** Develop emotionally, socially, and culturally aware individuals who work effectively as a team.

**Objective 1.1:** Intentionally incorporate emotional, social, and cultural intelligence into all operations.

**Objective 1.2:** Ensure staff have training and resources necessary to work effectively with diverse populations.

**Goal 2:** Ensure there is unity across team members, so that we all have a shared vision of the library.

**Objective 2.1:** Develop and implement methods to facilitate understanding, trust, and cooperation between Service Areas.

**Objective 2.2:** Provide opportunities to learn and connect with others outside of their primary assigned role.

**Objective 2.3:** Cultivate and foster a culture where all team members adopt a shared MRL identity and where they are focused on the mission and not individual job descriptions.

**Goal 3:** Develop our team to more closely mirror the community we serve so that our patrons feel represented.

**Objective 3.1:** Prioritize diversity in recruitment and hiring practices.

**Objective 3.2:** Regularly review and revise policies and procedures with diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility mindset.

**Goal 4:** Foster an environment that encourages resourcefulness, perseverance, adaptability, compassion, and leadership among all team members so that we can co-create the library of the future.

**Objective 4.1:** Incorporate these behaviors and characteristics into communications, decision-making processes, and all interactions.

**Objective 4.2:** Actively and respectfully hold each other accountable for representation of these characteristics.

**Goal 5:** Have goals, expectations, mission benchmarks, and systems to ensure team members have role clarity and organizational vision to foster a positive culture of active participation and excellence.

**Objective 5.1:** Implement policies and practices to support and manage team members, incorporating transparency and accountability on managers to lead this effort.

**Objective 5.2:** Regularly identify and communicate goals, mission benchmarks and expectations.

**Objective 5.3:** Continuous improvement through evaluation and accountability using proven methods of developing employee performance.

**Objective 5.4:** Intentionally celebrate success with milestones that are embedded into processes, mission benchmarks, and planning.

## OUTCOMES

We will know we have accomplished our goals when we see:

- A diverse team that is adaptable to change and works towards progress.
- A team that has the emotional and social competencies that enable Morrison-Reeves Library to be a leader in the community.
- Positive work atmosphere.
- Library users see themselves reflected in our team.
- Competent and highly trained team.
- Staff who are confident in their goals, performance expectations, and understand the role they play as part of the library's mission.

## METRICS

We will measure our actions and activities by tracking and monitoring the following:



**Number of completed trainings**



**Number of bilingual team members**



**Employee engagement satisfaction**



**Staff performance feedback loops are systemic and active**



**Methods of performance measurement and evaluation**



**Methods of staff input/feedback established and used**



# PILLAR 5: OPERATIONAL SUCCESS

The "Operational Success" pillar is the foundation of Morrisson-Reeves Library's strategic plan, embodying our responsibility to achieve excellence in all operations. Our responsibility is to operate from a place of future sustainability and investment while managing our internal operations well.

**Goal 1:** Make effective decisions to drive the short- and long-term success of projects and initiatives.

**Objective 1.1:** Collect and evaluate diverse stakeholder feedback and relevant data to review and create, or implement, projects and decisions.

**Objective 1.2:** Use industry standards and forecasting tools in project planning and decision making to responsibly leverage resources.

**Goal 2:** Create and implement effective and inclusive processes to make our operations more efficient.

**Objective 2.1:** Operate with up-to-date and efficient procedures.

**Objective 2.2:** Regularly assess and adjust facilities, services, technology, and operations.

**Objective 2.3:** Communicate regularly to ensure transparency.

**Objective 2.4:** Ensure a shared understanding of policies, procedures, processes, and decision-making to create workplace accountability.

**Objective 2.5:** Operate using strategies that enable our team members, patrons, and community to have equitable access to the building, spaces, services, resources, and collections that align with their unique circumstances.

**Objective 2.6:** Standardize processes to ensure consistency in operating the organization.

**Goal 3:** Be good stewards by diversifying our revenue streams and acting resourcefully to drive future growth.

**Objective 3.1:** Secure diverse revenue streams that include grants, donors, sponsors, and partnerships to address budget needs effectively.

**Objective 3.2:** Effectively manage current resources with an eye towards the future of MRL.

## OUTCOMES

We will know we have accomplished our goals when we see:

- Stakeholders feel connected and informed about what we are doing and why it's important.
- Policies are accessible and understood by appropriate stakeholders.
- Adequate funding across the organization to meet needs.

## METRICS

We will measure our actions and activities by tracking and monitoring the following:



**Number of stakeholders reached**



**Initiative successes**



**Number of stakeholders that participate in feedback loops**



**Adequate funding for initiatives**



**Diversity of stakeholders**



**Consistently useful data sources**



**Increased variety and amount of funds**



**Effective stakeholder feedback methods established**





**We**   
**Our Library**  
 **MRL**  
Morrison-Reeves Library

**We**   
**Our Library**  
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# MRL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Morrisson-Reeves Library's primary funding source is local property taxes. MRL also receives local income taxes and miscellaneous revenues that support the operating budget. Available fund balances in the General Fund and other appropriate funds, such as the Library Improvement Reserve Fund and the Rainy Day Fund, allow MRL to meet its cash flow requirements without having to utilize short-term borrowing instruments.

MRL staff does pursue grant opportunities when available and appropriate. MRL also appreciates generous donations from individuals and organizations, which allows us to fund special projects, staff development, and specialized materials. In addition, the Friends of MRL generously provide financial support for public programs, marketing, and staff development.

Sound fiscal stewardship is a top priority for both the MRL staff and the Board of Trustees.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the people who dedicated their time and played an instrumental role in shaping our Strategic Plan. Their experience, wisdom, and expertise were essential in crafting our vision for the future. We also extend our appreciation to the diverse range of stakeholders who have been pivotal in this journey - some are listed below, and many are interested members of the community who took the time to provide their input during our survey process. These perspectives enriched our understanding and guided our efforts.

This Strategic Plan demonstrates the power of collective wisdom and collaboration. We are incredibly grateful for the contributions of each individual and the groups involved, as they have provided the vision and clarity towards a better future for Morrisson-Reeves Library and the community we serve.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment.  
Morrisson-Reeves Library

## TEAM MRL

The entire library team holds a wealth of community knowledge and library service experience. In an effort to leverage their expertise, a comprehensive survey asked all team members to rank services, describe the use of spaces and materials, and their vision for the future of MRL. All staff were invited to participate in person at several Listening Sessions. These focused conversations informed the outcomes and responses.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Jennifer Lewis

Vice President, Kelley Cruse-Nicholson

Treasurer, Susan Isaacs

Member, Adam Forrest

Ex-officio Secretary, Dena Little

## FRIENDS OF MORRISSON-REEVES LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Surveys and conversations engaged the Friends of the Library. The outcome was to understand their interests as a partner to the Library and their perspectives on the Library's core purpose and services.

## FRIENDS Board members are:

President, John B. Martin, II

Vice President, Millie Martin Emery

Co-Treasurer, Philip Martin

Co-Treasurer, Becky Baker

Secretary, Heather Lerner

Book Sale Co-Chair, Teresa Wright

Book Sale Co-Chair, Rudy Groot

Volunteer Coordinator, Peggy Booker

Member, Stasia Veramallay

Member, Al Wentz

## TACTICAL TEAM

The Tactical Team created the library survey, which served as a tool to gather vital information from our community regarding library services. This team also led the formation and management of the Focus Groups.

Melissa Hunt, Lead

Simona Hiltner

Kate Huston

Erica Pearson

## DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Development Team led the task of reviewing the community surveys, environmental scans, and the data collected from a Community Listening Session and various Focus Groups. Informed by this data, they narrowed down the feedback and ideas into structured goals and outcomes, creating the pillars, goals, objectives, and outcomes for the coming years.

Arianna Cook

Beth Harrick

Melissa Hunt

Kristen Kirk

Jenie Lahmann

Dena Little

Sarah Morey

Deirdré Schirmer

The Implementation Team will create the framework for how we will formulate tasks necessary to achieve the goals set in the Strategic Plan successfully. Regular evaluations will keep the MRL Team on task and to achieve the goals set forth.

## CONSULTING PARTNERS



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