



Morrisson-Reeves Library

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



Message from MRL Director

Dena Little

It is with great pride that I present our 2025 Annual Report. 2025 was a landmark period for Morrisson-Reeves Library, defined by a commitment to our mission:

To connect people to Information, Inspiration, and Infinite Opportunities.

This past year proved that MRL is in motion. We have worked tirelessly to break down barriers to access, most notably through the launch of the MRL Express book truck, the development of a new Engagement Team focused exclusively on reaching out beyond the library building, doubling the investment in e-books and e-audiobooks via Libby, and the completion of our first full year as a member of the Evergreen Indiana Consortium.

However, I must also be candid about the challenges ahead for MRL. The passage of Senate Enrolled Act 1 (SEA 1) has fundamentally altered the fiscal landscape for all Indiana libraries. With new caps on revenue growth and shifting budget oversight, our ability to maintain daily operations while addressing the critical infrastructure needs of our aging building is being tested. While we will continue to provide the service, materials, and resources to you, we may need to be adaptable as to how we do that.

As you read through this report, you will see a library that is resilient, visionary, and ready for what's next. Thank you for being part of our story.



Message from MRL Board President

Jennifer Lewis

It has been my privilege to serve as president of the Morrisson-Reeves Library Board of Trustees and to have a front-row seat to all of the thoughtful and innovative ways in which MRL's staff brought its mission to life over the last year. 2025 was filled with accomplishments to celebrate as well as tremendous ongoing challenges. Through it all, the MRL staff and Trustees have demonstrated our unwavering commitment to our community.

More than ever, public libraries play an essential role in civic society. While libraries continue to perform the traditional role of providing access to information for all, they have evolved to become true community hubs that provide so much more than books. MRL provides valuable programming for all ages, access to technology, and secure meeting spaces for community organizations. It serves as a heating and cooling station as well as a safe place to spend the day for vulnerable members of our community. It provides outreach to local organizations and free services such as notary public, tax preparation assistance, legal information, while expanding access to library materials county-wide through the MRL Express book truck. By addressing unmet community needs, MRL ensures the library remains an inclusive space with equal access for everyone.

Morrisson-Reeves Library belongs to the community, and its Board and staff serve as stewards of this valuable public resource. As a cornerstone of downtown Richmond and a vibrant Wayne County, we thank you for your continued support and investment in our library's success.

Morrisson-Reeves Library Board of Trustees

Jennifer Lewis, *President*

Susan Isaacs, *Treasurer*

Stasia Veramallay

Adam Forrest

Library Leadership Team

Dena Little, *Library Director*

Timothy Branson, *Human Resources Manager*

Sarah Morey, *Technical Services Manager*

Mellisa Hunt, *Information Services Manager*

Deirdré Schirmer, *Public Services Manager*

Kristen Kirk, *Youth Services Manager*

Josh Imhoff, *Engagement Services Manager*

Roger Baatz, *Building Services Manager*

Wayne County Contractual Library Board of Trustees

Carol Pentacost, *President*

John Martin, *Vice President*

Susan Isaacs, *Treasurer*

Jennifer Lewis

Adam Forrest

Rochelle Rogan

Stasia Veramallay

MRL Mission

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

MRL Vision

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

Our 2023–2027 Strategic Plan serves as our roadmap, focusing our efforts on five key pillars of service. These priorities are brought to life through our Guiding Principles, which shape every interaction and decision at MRL.

The Five Strategic Pillars

Resource Hub: We will be the cornerstone of knowledge, growth, inclusivity, and enrichment for Richmond and beyond.

Inspiring Growth: We will commit to living out our mission of connecting people to information, inspiration, and infinite opportunities.

Community Connected: We will become an integral part of the communities we serve.

Team Investment: We will invest in and nurture our talent.

Operational Success: We will embody our responsibility to achieve excellence in all operations.

Our Guiding Principles:
Leadership ▪ Teamwork ▪ Perseverance
Resourcefulness ▪ Compassion ▪ Adaptability

RESOURCE HUB

Patron Engagement



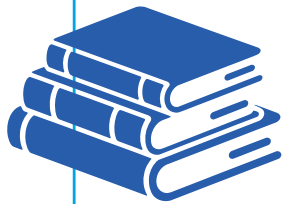
People with
a MRL Card:
14,074

(28% of residents have a library card)

Average
Library Vists
Per Day:
428

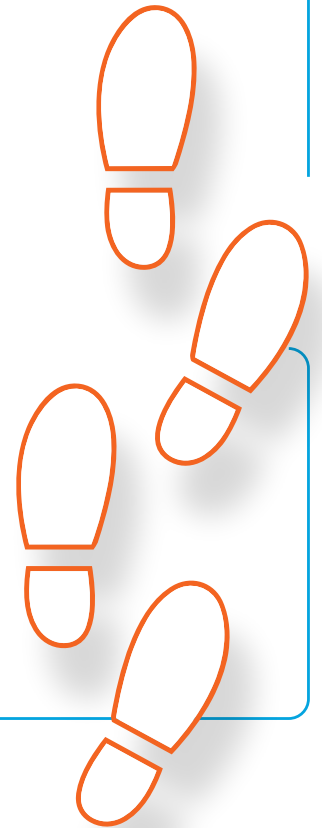
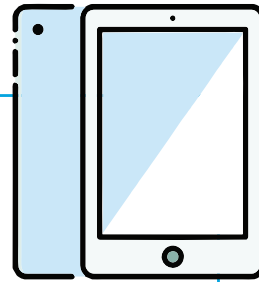
Visitors:
130,574

Circulation & Use



Physical Material
Checkouts:
105,884

Digital
Checkouts:
91,215



Digital & Logistics



Database
Uses:
16,587



Evergreen
Transits
24,618



School Visits

Outreach & Engagement Visits:

259

Offsite

2939

People Reached

Birth to 5 Year Old Programs & Attendance:

3,364

Attendees

243

Programs

Library Programs: **885**

Attendance At Library Programs:

11,398

Technology & Services

Public Computer Uses:

14,475



Pages Printed:

80,299

Faxes:

2,355



Notary Transactions:

565

(With Three Notaries, That's 188 per person!)



Public Room Uses:

376



Study Room Uses:

1,009



Website Sessions:

72,607



INSPIRING GROWTH

Building Masterplan

In late 2024, MRL launched a Comprehensive Building Masterplan to prepare for an upcoming renovation. This project builds directly on our 2023 Strategic Plan and our 2024 to 2025 Master Planning phase.

Community feedback is the foundation of this project. Throughout this multi-year process, we focused heavily on public engagement to shape the future of the library:

Strategic Planning (2023): We connected with over 1,000 residents through surveys, focus groups, and engagement sessions to prioritize future programs, services, and building features.

Master Planning (2024 to 2025): We expanded our outreach to engage over 36,000 residents in person and online. This phase gathered vital feedback on specific operational and stylistic choices for the renovated space.

To ensure community voices were heard at every step, we hosted seven public meetings dedicated to the Building Masterplan. You can read the meeting summaries on our website or watch the full video recordings on YouTube.

User Experience Study

In 2025, we did more than just add books; we studied how you use our spaces. Through Applied User Experience studies, we researched exactly how patrons interact with our building and digital tools to ensure our future improvements are rooted in real-world data.

These studies helped us identify critical areas for growth, including physical accessibility throughout the inside and outside of our building, and service navigability for our in-person and digital resources.

As we move into 2026, these insights will guide our renovations and service updates, ensuring that everyone can navigate and enjoy everything MRL has to offer.



Partnerships, Collaborators, Supporters

MRL actively collaborates with organizations across Wayne County to expand our community impact. Chief among our supporters is the Friends of Morrison-Reeves Library. Through memberships and book sales, the Friends raise thousands of dollars annually to fund our marketing efforts and popular events like One World One Plate, the musical artist series, preschool storytimes, and weekly teen programs.

We also want to highlight these vital community partnerships:

Whitewater Valley Pro Bono Commission: Wayne County is currently classified as a legal desert with fewer than one attorney per 1,000 residents. To help bridge this gap, MRL hosts monthly "Ask a Lawyer" sessions. In 2025, this partnership provided 328 people with free legal aid.

Boys and Girls Club of Wayne County: Through a longstanding relationship, we operate a branch library at their Jeffers and First Bank units to give local youth direct access to books and reading materials.

Our Broader Network: We proudly work alongside AARP, Richmond Senior Recreation Center, Richmond Art Museum, Amigos, Hayes Arboretum, Richmond Parks and Recreation, Civic Theatre, Richmond Community Schools, and Richmond Meltdown.

A stylized graphic of a bookshelf with various colored books (blue, orange, white) and the text 'COMMUNITY CONNECTED' overlaid. 'COMMUNITY' is in white with a blue outline, and 'CONNECTED' is in solid blue.

COMMUNITY CONNECTED

Engagement and Outreach Highlights

We actively meet families where they are to share library resources and sign up young readers. In 2025, our outreach efforts included partnering with the Richmond Mall, Retro Rush Arcade, and the Excel Center for three back-to-school events. We also connected with families at seven open houses and literacy nights across Northeastern, Community Christian, Seton, and Richmond Community Schools.

At the library, we hosted 193 programs for adults with a total attendance of 3,669. These gatherings offered something for everyone, featuring informational lectures, art classes, puzzle nights, and live music.

Marketing Engagement

We expanded our physical and digital reach to ensure the community always knows what MRL has to offer. By creating more video content, we successfully highlighted our materials and services in a fun and accessible way. This strategy resulted in an 8% increase in Facebook followers and a 30% jump on Instagram.

To reach people outside of our digital network, we began delivering our seasonal program guides and flyers directly to local businesses.

Engagement Team Goals and Wins

The Engagement Team's primary goal is to boost library visibility out in the community, making connections even with folks who might never step inside our building.

In 2025, the team participated in 49 off-site events, ranging from the Richmond Farmers Market and Oktoberfest to local wellness fairs. During these visits, we interacted directly with 3,121 people and successfully registered 98 people for new library cards while out in the field.







TEAM INVESTMENT

Investing in Our People

We've reimagined how we celebrate and support the MRL team. Our new performance evaluation tool, developed through collaborative committee work and led by our HR manager, focuses on recognizing employee strengths and fostering continuous growth. By empowering our staff, we ensure they are better equipped to empower our community.

Trauma-Informed Care

In 2024-2025, our staff underwent specialized training in trauma-informed service. This investment strengthens our Guiding Principle of Compassion, allowing our team to better navigate sensitive or difficult patron interactions and support our most vulnerable patrons with dignity and professional care.

Committee Work

Library employees play a vital role in shaping the library's future by actively participating in strategic decision making and navigating daily operational challenges through collaborative committee work. This collective expertise is channeled through several key groups, including the Incident Oversight Committee, Selector Committee, Audit Working Group, Renovation Committee, and Staff Spirit Committee.

Socialized Guiding Principles

In 2025, we transformed our Guiding Principles into action by encouraging staff to recognize one another for living our values. By rewarding peer-to-peer appreciation with small tokens of gratitude, we've created a virtuous cycle of recognition. This initiative ensures that our Guiding Principles are celebrated throughout MRL every day.



Staff Development Day *October 2025*





OPERATIONAL SUCCESS

Process Audits

Process audits help our team establish operational baselines, increase consistency, and identify areas for improvement. Every fall, our staff selects specific focus areas, prioritizing new services to ensure we use our resources effectively.

Data-driven Decision Making

We rely on concrete metrics to guide our library operations. By tracking library usage, program attendance, and community feedback, we ensure our time and budget are allocated efficiently and aligned with what our patrons actually need.

Facility Assessment and Project Planning

As we look at addressing critical needs of our building, continuous facility assessment is a top priority for MRL. We are actively evaluating our current infrastructure and mapping out project timelines to ensure a smooth transition and a future-ready library.

Finances

Fiscal responsibility is core to our operations. In 2025, we focused on resourcefulness by securing external funding, including key grants that expanded our technology and services. We actively manage our budget with a focus on the future to guarantee MRL's long-term sustainability.

Communication Efforts

In Summer 2025, we launched our first seasonal program guide. Released quarterly (Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring), these free print and digital booklets consolidate all MRL activities into one accessible resource distributed throughout Wayne County.

Creating these guides has also improved our internal operations. We now design our programs further in advance in three-month blocks. This big-picture approach allows us to carefully evaluate what works, coordinate related events, and deliver exactly what our community wants.



MRL
Morrisson-Reeves Library

Spring

2026

LIBRARY
PROGRAM GUIDE



MRL
Morrisson-Reeves



WINTER

2025 AND 2026

LIBRARY PROGRAM GUIDE

2

MORRISON REEVES LIBRARY

LIBRARY PROGRAM GUIDE
FALL 2025



WHAT'S NEW



First Full Year of Evergreen

2025 marked our first full year as a member of the Evergreen Indiana Consortium. This partnership is a key example of our fiscal stewardship, providing our community with the resources of a “big city” system while operating as a single entity here in Richmond.

By joining over 130 libraries across Indiana, your MRL card grants you access to nearly 8 million items, which increases access to 8,000% more items than before, provided at no additional cost to you. If we don't have a book on our shelves in Richmond, we can have it shipped here from a partner library.

Technology Updates

Providing reliable internet and computer access has been a core MRL service since we first offered public internet in 1999. Today, we continue this mission by providing free public computers, Wi-Fi throughout our building and grounds, and mobile internet hotspots for home checkout.

In 2025, we expanded our technology offerings with two major additions:

In-House Laptops: Thanks to a generous grant from the Wayne County Broadband Task Force and the Wayne County Foundation, we purchased laptops for patron use. Patrons can now check these out to work comfortably anywhere inside the library.

Interactive Smart Board: We purchased a mobile 65-inch interactive smart board for patron use. Because it is on wheels, it offers far more versatility than our traditional conference room screen. Community groups are already using it across the library to host virtual meetings and deliver presentations.

Coming in 2026

MRL Video Game Collection

In Spring 2026, MRL is launching our first-ever video game collection available for checkout. Patrons will soon be able to borrow a wide variety of titles, featuring a mix of new releases and classic favorites for Xbox, Nintendo Switch, and PlayStation consoles.

MRL Express

Starting in early 2026, we will launch MRL Express, a new mobile outreach vehicle designed to bridge the gap between our main library building and the residents of Richmond and the 11 surrounding townships we serve. This initiative is all about meeting you where you are and ensuring that everyone in our service area has convenient access to books, technology, and library resources.

Our strategic goal is to provide equitable access to all residents. The MRL Express allows us to transport a larger selection of materials than our current outreach vehicle and establish regular stops throughout the county.

This service is funded through a combination of a grant from the Wayne County Foundation, Wayne County Foundation endowment funds, and tax revenue from the Wayne County Contractual Library. This support allows us to serve the 11 townships outside of Wayne Township that are part of our service area.



On Location in Abington



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

How is Your Library Funded?

Morrisson-Reeves Library is powered by two primary revenue sources, both rooted in the community we are proud to serve. Together, these sources cover our daily operational costs—the essential expenses required to keep the library running throughout the year.

Local Property Taxes: This is our primary source of funding, ensuring our doors stay open, our physical and “virtual” shelves stay stocked, and our services remain accessible for all. We take our role as stewards of these funds seriously, with every financial decision vetted by our Board of Trustees to ensure long-term operational stability.

Local Income Tax (LIT): Up to 25% of our annual revenue comes from local income tax distributions. These funds allow us to adapt to the growing needs of our residents, from high-speed digital access to small business resources.

We don't just spend tax dollars; we multiply them. Our leadership and Board of Trustees evaluate every fiscal decision based on community need and sustainability. As a result, for every \$1.00 of tax revenue received, our library returns \$5.00 in direct value to the community.

Bridging the Gap: Operations vs. Infrastructure

It is important to note that these tax revenues are dedicated strictly to operations—salaries, utility bills, books, supplies and programs. They do not provide means for the significant costs associated with repairing or renovating our building.

Because of the restrictions of Senate Enrolled Act 1 and other current legislatures, securing the capital for large-scale repairs—such as ADA and safety updates, and needed structural renovation—is limited and challenging and requires us to envision a future that may include reducing or adjusting our space and capacity to provide the current value of services and support that our community relies upon.

Additional Support: MRL would not be able to offer the volume or caliber of our programs and services without additional financial support.

The Friends of Morrison-Reeves Library, a dedicated volunteer-led organization, serves as a vital bridge between the library and the community. Through their fundraising efforts—including the beloved book sales—the Friends provide essential financial support for our diverse range of public programs. From summer reading performers and music programs to staff development, their contribution ensures that our patrons have access to enriching experiences that go beyond our core services.

Grants and endowments empower us to expand our reach and launch special projects. A standout example is the MRL Express, our new book truck debuted in late 2025! This 'library on wheels' is designed to bring our resources directly to your neighborhood. This initiative was made possible through the generous support of a Wayne County Foundation 2025 Cycle 1 Grant and a dedicated library endowment, allowing us to innovate without stretching beyond our general operating budget.

Last, direct donations from our residents and other library supporters provide flexibility and financial security. This support will be essential for our ability to adapt for the future.





80 N 6th St,
Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 966-8291

Mon 9:30 AM-8 PM
Tues 9:30 AM-8 PM
Wed 9:30 AM-8 PM
Thur 9:30 AM-8 PM
Fri 9:30 AM-6 PM
Sat 9:30 AM-4 PM
Sun Closed

mrlinfo.org