



DEKALB PUBLIC LIBRARY  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

June 2019



## Our Vision for the Future

In 2018 the DeKalb Public Library embarked on a strategic planning process to consider current, anticipated and possible future community needs. Careful consideration was given to determine which of those needs the Library can help meet. These strategic directions provide the foundation for the kinds of services that we develop and prioritize.

Working with the community, DeKalb Public Library staff members, the Board of Trustees, and under the guidance of facilitator Pam Clark-Reidenbach of the Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence at Northern Illinois University we refined our mission, developed goals, and identified strategies to achieve them.

It is the DeKalb Public Library's mission to "Enrich, Inform, Entertain, Inspire." With this in mind, and using feedback from surveys, focus groups, and interviews, the team discussed a vision for the future and identified common themes and critical issues to address in the next few years.

Although it is not possible to predict the future, it is the intent of the DeKalb Public Library that this strategic plan form a framework to guide our decisions based on the wants and needs of our community.

### Timeline

October 2017	DKPL staff members identify goals and values for the library during a staff development session.
July 2018	Pam Clark-Reidenbach leads as Library Board of Trustees and DKPL staff convene to discuss strategic planning and create a roadmap for the process of creating a new plan.
August-December 2018	DKPL staff conduct a series of listening sessions, interviews, and surveys to solicit community feedback and input from members of the public and key constituent groups.
April 2019	Library Board of Trustees and DKPL staff reconvene to interpret community input and identify goals and strategies for success.
June 2019	Draft Strategic Plan presented to the Library Board of Trustees for approval.



DEKALB  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

# Strategic Plan Summary 2019 - 2022



## Enrich

- **Encourage lifelong learning**
  - Provide early learning experiences for young children
  - Strengthen the library's contribution to formal education in DeKalb
  - Support personal growth and lifelong learning
- **Make the library accessible to all**
  - Provide full access to library experiences for people of different abilities
  - Make resources more accessible
- **Be an excellent place to visit and work**
  - Provide a welcoming environment
  - Steward resources effectively
  - Support library staff



## Inform

- **Make library services known**
  - Inform DeKalb's diverse population of what the library has to offer
  - Illuminate hidden resources
- **Support workforce development**
  - Support DeKalb businesses and non-profits
  - Help prepare residents for successful employment
  - Expand the library's role in digital fluency
- **Foster civic engagement**
  - Create opportunities for people to become informed and engaged on important issues
  - Be a source for government resources



## Entertain

- **Offer programs that delight**
  - Be DeKalb's source for free informal instruction and programs
  - Embrace the library's role as a cultural center in DeKalb
  - Bring library programs to other locations
- **Build a community of readers**
  - Maintain a diverse and accessible collection
  - Celebrate reading and writing



## Inspire

- **Foster creativity and innovation**
  - Position the library as a learning lab for creativity
  - Embrace a library culture of innovation
- **Utilize community expertise**
  - Create local partnerships
  - Showcase community talent
  - Engage volunteers

## ENRICH

### Goal: Encourage lifelong learning

Strategy: Provide early learning experiences for young children

- Encourage early literacy for school readiness through programming, outreach services, and partnerships with organizations invested in this effort.
- Be a strong participant in the movement to provide early learning experiences to DeKalb's youngest children
- Target early learning resources to caregivers and parents

Strategy: Strengthen the library's contribution to formal education in DeKalb

- Enhance partnerships with educational institutions and provide support to DeKalb teachers
- Work with education professionals, including homeschools, to provide library services that augment their efforts.
- Actively join community efforts to close educational achievement gaps at all levels

Strategy: Support personal growth and lifelong learning

- Create expanded programming for adults and seniors
- Develop programs that address a variety of literacies

### Goal: Make the library accessible to all

Strategy: Provide full access to library experiences for people of different abilities

- Improve building accessibility and signage
- Offer programs and materials for people with a range of abilities

Strategy: Make resources more accessible

- Relocate collections to be accessible during all library hours
- Expand offerings of online resources that can be accessed from home
- Consider new uses of library space to meet the changing needs of patrons
- Seek opportunities to serve patrons with difficulty getting to the library

### Goal: Be an excellent place to visit and work

Strategy: Provide a welcoming environment

- Create a library culture statement using values expressed by staff
- Train staff on their role in achieving goals laid out in the library's mission statement and strategic plan, with emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Strive to provide excellent customer service to everyone we encounter
- Create clear, understandable, reasonable policies and enforce them fairly
- Adopt evaluation systems to assess patron satisfaction with library programs and services

Strategy: Steward resources effectively

- Pay off remaining debt and create a financial plan to save 25% of the annual budget in reserves
- Create systems to anticipate and prepare for future costs
- Evaluate and adjust staffing levels and compensation to be competitive based on comparable market data
- Review contracts and costs regularly
- Maintain library facilities and infrastructure properly

Strategy: Support library staff

- Build in time for professional development for individual staff members and staff as a whole
- Identify opportunities for both in-person and remote learning
- Cultivate good internal communication

## **INFORM**

### **Goal: Make library services known**

Strategy: Inform DeKalb's diverse population of what the library has to offer

- Market library programs and services through multiple channels
- Participate in community events to share information
- Educate patrons about reference and reader's advisory services
- Reach out to residents who don't speak English as a first language
- Communicate the relevancy and impact of library services to elected officials and the public

Strategy: Illuminate hidden resources

- Provide pathfinders to deeper parts of collection and electronic resources
- Create special displays about current issues
- Increase display space within the collection
- Educate patrons about databases and PrairieCat resources and how to access them

### **Goal: Support workforce development**

Strategy: Support DeKalb businesses and non-profits

- Educate the business community about the rich resources of the library
- Provide programs and services to facilitate the success of nonprofit organizations

Strategy: Help prepare residents for successful employment

- Provide useful resources for jobseekers
- Partner with workforce readiness centers to create a strong network of support for workers
- Offer programs related to job skill training
- Promote library resources that support completion of high school and higher education

Strategy: Expand the library's role in digital fluency

- Support the learning efforts of patrons wherever they are on the digital journey
- Investigate ways to increase accessibility of technology outside the library
- Create opportunities for people to participate in online skill building and education

### **Goal: Foster civic engagement**

Strategy: Create opportunities for people to become informed and engaged on important issues

- Offer programs and displays related to current topics of interest
- Educate patrons about complicated topics such as media consumption, financial literacy, and understanding health information
- Become the best source for quality information about common life events and challenges

Strategy: Be a source for government resources

- Provide access to online federal, state, and local government resources
- Offer programs to help navigate government resources and initiatives
- Provide opportunities for the public to engage with elected officials
- Explore the use of library resources for special civic events such as voting or census-taking
- Make resources for those seeking American citizenship easily accessible

## ENTERTAIN

### Goal: Offer programs that delight

Strategy: Be DeKalb's source for free informal instruction and programs

- Offer classes and hands-on workshops in a range of disciplines for all ages
- Pilot innovative program formats that encourage engagement
- Experiment with scheduling to see if different times meet the needs of different audiences

Strategy: Embrace the library's role as a cultural center in DeKalb

- Promote the library as a place for community gathering
- Celebrate cultural diversity through programming, including afterhours events
- Engage diverse populations to ensure that DeKalb's different populations have resources available to meet their needs

Strategy: Bring library programs to other locations

- Partner with organizations to provide programs outside the library
- Offer passes to museums, zoos, and local attractions

### Goal: Build a community of readers

Strategy: Maintain a diverse and accessible collection

- Pilot new methods to organize, deliver, and evaluate the collection
- Collect a range of materials that reflect the diversity of DeKalb
- Lead efforts to preserve community collections available in older formats
- Build a comprehensive digital collection
- Expand world language collections for all ages

Strategy: Celebrate reading and writing

- Encourage and support local writers of all ages
- Partner with local organizations to invite authors to speak
- Create opportunities for patrons to share their love of reading
- Support efforts to increase literacy

## INSPIRE

### Goal: Foster creativity and innovation

Strategy: Position the library as a learning lab for creativity

- Increase access to advanced technologies in ways that encourage interaction and exploration
- Implement a system for workshops to allow patrons to track skills acquisition and build upon existing knowledge
- Introduce people to ideas that spark curiosity

Strategy: Embrace a library culture of innovation

- Build staff and institutional capacity to innovate through training
- Keep pace with advances in the world of information services
- Boldly embrace pilot programs and be willing to improvise or change course if needed

### Goal: Utilize community expertise

Strategy: Create local partnerships

- Invite presentations and workshops in areas of expertise
- Create robust collaborations with community groups and government agencies
- Work with community innovators to support and explore new ideas

Strategy: Showcase community talent

- Include original locally created materials and resources in the collection
- Invite local experts to share their knowledge
- Create exhibits and programs with area schools
- Encourage local organizations to use library meeting spaces for programs

Strategy: Engage volunteers

- Identify and define volunteer opportunities
- Pilot new methods and procedures to harness volunteer expertise
- Recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers