

# **Muncie Public Library Long-Range Plan 2020-2025**

## **Mission**

The Muncie Public Library will provide accessible and innovative services responding to the reading, informational, educational, and enrichment needs of the community.

## **Vision**

We envision a future where people get excited by ideas and utilize the resources of the Library to explore, discover, imagine, and create. We seek to be recognized for providing access to new technology, print resources, and educational opportunities. We commit ourselves to the community and will strive to provide leadership in solving the problems facing the community through a variety of strategies, including public conversation/town hall meeting events.

## **Values**

We value our ability to be proactive and responsive to community needs. We value organization effectiveness and efficiency. We value and support innovation and flexibility in planning and operation. We value our relationship with each other and the community and will treat everyone with respect and courtesy.

## **Community Needs and Goals**

According to the latest available data, the population of Muncie, Indiana, is 69,010. The 2010 Census, American Community Survey, reported that half of the city's population 25+ had not continued their education beyond high school. Less than one-quarter of Muncie's population has earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. The 2016 median household income for Muncie was \$41,041. The 2018 Kids Count Data Book reports that Delaware County has a child population of 22,500 and has the second-highest childcare costs in Indiana. The data also notes a slight increase in the number of child abuse and neglect cases reported in the county since 2017. Poverty and food insecurity are two major challenges facing many of Muncie's residents. Recent state and national reports define a majority of the population as the working poor, struggling to provide a meaningful life for themselves and their children.

According to the Indiana Department of Education Compass portal, Muncie Community Schools (MCS) report Free and Reduced Lunch rates of 78%, with some schools reaching as high as 92%. In 2019, MCS instituted free meals, including breakfast and lunch, to all MCS students to address the food insecurity issue in Muncie. For the past several years, MPL has served lunches to school children during the summer months.

Recently By5, a local early childhood education initiative in partnership with Muncie Community Schools, conducted the third Essential Skills Assessment for kindergarten students and determined that nearly 48% of kindergarten students lacked the necessary skill set needed to be successful in their first year of school. Muncie Public Library served as a partner in the Muncie Action Plan (MAP), hosting several town hall meetings and focus groups to identify the needs of the community and later helping to convene task force groups to tackle the issues identified. The MAP project focused primarily on quality of life issues.

Another effort focused more narrowly on business and economic goals for Muncie. The City of Muncie and the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce identified several civic and economic goals for the Muncie community. These goals include the expansion and retention of existing businesses, the attraction of new businesses, and enhanced community image, workforce education, community planning, and early childhood education.

United Way of Delaware County, through community conversations of which Muncie Public Library representatives have participated, has identified the primary needs of the community as the following: early literacy and grade level reading attainment, access to quality health care, education attainment, and financial stability.

### **Assessment/objectives facilities, services, technology, and operations**

Muncie Public Library worked closely with the organizations identified in the Community Needs and Goals section and played a pivotal role through service on the boards and as members of planning coalitions of many of the community organizations. Further, MPL is in a unique position to identify community needs by providing library services, information services, and referral services daily to many citizens who are marginalized because of poverty or other needs. Muncie Public Library “has a seat at the table” for many community conversations, and feels the service responses to community needs which MPL identifies as most important are as follows:

- Early literacy skills

- Educational opportunities for adults to increase workforce readiness
- Technology skills and computer literacy to increase workforce readiness and to prepare citizens for the technology needs to navigate daily life
- A reduction in the digital divide that exists in Muncie and Center Township
- Increase neighborhood connectivity and instill pride of place and civic engagement in citizens.
- Access to meaningful and informational programming and resources for personal enrichment

### **Facilities Assessment**

The Muncie Public Library system has four service locations and one location used as a repository by the Friends of MPL for the selling of discarded library materials. In 2017, construction for the Gateway to Gardening Pavilions at Maring-Hunt Library added value and new service opportunities to the surrounding community and Muncie as a whole. The Gateway to Gardening features space for outdoor educational activities and nature play, ADA compliant gardening plots, and an outdoor kitchen for large community and library events.

Solar powered or hardwired motion security lights were installed in the Gateway to Gardening Pavilions at Maring-Hunt Library and solar powered security lights were installed at Connection Corner, MPL's technology branch. A solar powered motion security light was also installed on the shed at Kennedy Library. The parking lots at Connection Corner and Carnegie were restriped and trees along the perimeter of the lot and street were trimmed and are maintained by MPL staff.

In 2018, a professional lawn service was contracted to assist MPL staff with library grounds. Carpets at each location are also professionally cleaned on a regular basis and in a manner that extends the life of the carpet.

The unexpected failure of the heating system at Carnegie in the middle of winter in 2019 resulted in an emergency expense to replace the roof-top heaters at the Carnegie building. The discovery of roof leaks secured the preservation of this historic building as one of our priorities in 2020 along with the replacement of the HVAC chiller system at Maring-Hunt. Other unexpected concerns and emergency repairs to MPL facilities during the last long-range period included a new roof installation at Connection Corner and, most recently, hurricane strength doors installed

at Kennedy Library as a result of severe storm damage to the existing door. Several of our buildings including the historic Carnegie Library, will require extensive expert care and renovation within the next five years. The Director will continue to work with the Board of Trustees, Facilities Manager, local experts, and national restoration specialists to fund and schedule projects as possible.

**Goal 1:** The Library will inspect, repair buildings promptly.

**Objective 1.1:** A new HVAC chiller system will be installed at Maring-Hunt Library in 2020.

**Objective 1.2:** Investigate a new roof for Carnegie Library.

**Objective 1.3:** Investigate sealing outer basement walls and repairing the interior basement walls at Carnegie.

**Objective 1.4:** Investigate power washing and tuck-point the exterior of Carnegie.

**Objective 1.5:** Investigate installation of archival quality window shades.

**Objective 1.6:** Investigate opportunities to improve art and artifact storage and display at the Carnegie Library.

**Objective 1.7:** Collaborate with neighborhood residents and area businesses to plan and design green space for Kennedy Library.

**Objective 1.8:** Investigate opportunities to upgrade and increase the utilization of the Hunt Building, currently used by the Friends of Muncie Public Library.

**Objective 1.9:** Investigate opportunities to increase staff space at the Connection Corner.

**Objective 1.10:** Investigate exterior window washing for all four facilities.

**Objective 1.11:** Convert to LED lighting in all facilities.

**Goal 2:** Promote Muncie Public Library as a safe and welcoming space for learning, leisure, and social interaction.

**Objective 2.1:** Work with staff and community to create multifunctional spaces within the Library.

**Objective 2.2:** Create space within library locations that are conducive to quiet reflection.

**Objective 2.3:** Investigate funding to enhance existing facilities to accommodate current trends and best use of library space.

## **Services Assessment**

Muncie Public Library offers a wide range of collections, technologies, resources, and programming. Increasingly, MPL partners with organizations to conduct programs at off-site locations as well as in the Library. Programming is evaluated often for effectiveness and public interest. If a program is not meeting the needs of the community or producing the desired outcomes, MPL can step back, reassess, and refine the program offerings.

**Goal 1:** The Library will enable the creation and management of original content through the provision of digital tools and innovative computer applications.

**Objective 1.1:** Provide access to web tools that enable customers to create, store, and publish original content.

**Objective 1.2:** Provide access to local historical and genealogical resources by scanning and indexing fragile print documents and images into digital formats.

**Objective 1.3:** Provide training in the use of everyday technology (phones and PCs) for youth and adults.

**Objective 1.4:** Expand access to materials to youth-serving organizations through the shared MPL online catalog.

**Goal 2:** The Library will collaborate with literacy partners in the community to strengthen literacy efforts throughout Muncie.

**Objective 2.1:** Secure learning resources to benefit families, preschool, and elementary-age children in the development of basic reading literacy skills.

**Objective 2.2:** Work with Muncie Community Schools, United Way of Delaware and Henry Counties, Motivate Our Minds, Inc. and other organizations to train literacy tutors and place them with youth-serving organizations.

**Goal 3:** The Muncie Public Library will empower community residents with the information they need to promote civic participation, social responsibility, and lifelong learning.

**Objective 3.1:** Provide a neutral, safe space that is conducive to constructive engagement and public discourse where people work together to solve public problems.

**Objective 3.2:** Offer programming and educational opportunities that are informative, creative, and relevant to the needs and interests of all age groups in the community.

## **Technology Assessment**

Muncie Public Library uses The Library Corporation (TLC) as its Integrated Library System to manage its library collections. This also incorporates the collections of Muncie Community Schools and Motivate our Minds, Inc. Technology support and high-speed internet are provided by Ekeeper Systems Inc. and Education Networks of America (ENA). In 2018, the library's wireless technology was upgraded. Internet and connection speed between locations are at 100 Mbps with the ability to increase where necessary to 1000Gb. Carnegie Library is digitizing numerous local historical documents, such as yearbooks, legal records, etc., which are made accessible through MPL's website.

**Goal 1:** The Library will upgrade the technology environment and equipment as often as necessary.

**Objective 1.1:** Replace the AT&T Centrex telephone system with ENA VOIP.

**Objective 1.2:** Migrate to a new electronic calendar and room reservation system.

**Objective 1.3:** Replace coin boxes attached to library copiers and printers.

**Objective 1.4:** Plan for the implementation of RFID technology for item security and circulation.

## **Operations Assessment**

Using public comment, usage statistics, and the results of a 2017 public survey, the Library Director and the Muncie Public Library Board of Trustees evaluate locations, hours, services, etc. Service locations can be reached easily by most of the residents, especially when the local bus service is in operation. All four locations are accessible to those with mobility challenges. Large print and audiobooks are also available. The hours of operation were selected based on the usage pattern of each location and available staffing/funding. Use patterns are analyzed then compared with changes in community demographics and funding for effective operation. Services and collections are also modified as dictated by these factors and as funding allows.

**Goal 1:** The Library Director, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, will develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the long-term stability of library buildings and continuance of library services.

**Objective 1.1:** Convene a committee of library stakeholders to investigate opportunities to fund major facility renovations and improvement to the historic Carnegie and other facilities.

**Objective 1.2:** Seek funding opportunities for annual and unique programming initiatives.

**Objective 1.3:** Pursue collaborative projects to strengthen existing community services and neighborhood amenities.

**Goal 2:** The Muncie Public Library seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for all.

**Objective 2.1:** Investigate adding security personnel to library locations as warranted.

**Objective 2.2:** Upgrade and expand security surveillance in appropriate locations.

### **Ongoing Evaluation Process**

The goals of every manager and supervisor reflect the Library's Long Range Plan. Library managers and supervisors meet regularly with the Director to report on progress. Monthly written reports also document progress toward the Long Range Plan and are valuable in annual reports presented to the Board of Trustees, library staff, and the community at large.

### **Financial Resources and Sustainability**

Financial sustainability for Muncie Public Library means being continually aware of our financial capabilities and being ever vigilant for new streams of revenue for the Library. The majority of MPL's budget is provided through property taxes. However, grant opportunities, fundraising, partnerships, and efforts of the Friends of Muncie Public Library provide additional funding.

In 2009, the state of Indiana passed legislation that capped property taxes creating fiscal challenges to public libraries. The Library budget has been flat for 10 years. The Library works hard to maintain a six-month operating reserve. However, emergencies and rising costs could make it difficult to maintain library services in the future. As part of the planning process, the Library actively seeks alternative funding sources, grants, and partnerships with other organizations to balance services, maintain facilities, and plan for the future. The survival of the library system is assured because MPL administrative staff and the Board of Trustees are mindful of state financial guidance and annual reporting requirements. Trustees do their best to be good stewards of MPL resources. MPL is also confident in its Trustees to make the tough

decisions to protect 140 years of public library service to the city of Muncie. MPL is fortunate to have a legacy of sound financial service from administrative staff and board trustees. MPL maintains replacement schedules and emergency funds for dealing with unexpected events that may result in a change in plans.

### **Equipment Replacement Schedule**

Muncie Public Library follows a 4-year replacement cycle for computers and replacement of all other equipment either at the end of life or not able to repair. Operating and other software are upgraded when necessary.

### **Professional Development Strategy**

**Goal 1:** The Library values and encourages the professional development of staff and provides incentives to staff enrolled in higher education.

**Objective 1.1:** Promote the development of employees through participation in relevant professional career organizations, workshops, webinars, and other training opportunities.

**Objective 1.2:** Provide educational time off with pay for full-time employees.

**Objective 1.3:** Encourage participation and awareness of community organizations and activities.

**Objective 1.4:** Encourage participation on MPL committees.

**Objective 1.5:** Recognize the talents of employees and enable advancement within the organization through promotion and transfer.

**Objective 1.6:** Motivate managers and supervisors to recognize good staff performance and educational achievement.

**Objective 1.7:** Cultivate a work environment that values staff contributions to the overall effectiveness of the library.

### **Collaboration with Other Public Libraries and Community Partners**

Muncie Public Library has historically been a part of the sustainability of our community through active participation in long-range planning sessions and focus groups surrounding the issues affecting our community. These sessions enable MPL to work with community organizations to mobilize and organize people to make positive change. Muncie Public Library is confident in its ability and capacity to serve the Muncie community well into the future. The

reputation of MPL is stellar among key organizations in the Muncie community, such as the Ball Brothers Foundation, The Muncie Delaware Community Foundation, and the Muncie Chamber of Commerce.

Recent honors from community partners include a Chamber of Commerce Longevity Award for more than 100 years of continuous service to the community, a Muncie Clean and Beautiful Award for the library's environmental efforts, which include a solar parking lot project to generate electricity and a comprehensive community garden and green space, and recognition from the Delaware County Master Gardeners in honor of the garden and green space. The Muncie Public Library afterschool program, Great Achievers, was honored by the Student Voluntary Services at Ball State University as one of the best places to volunteer for BSU students.

MPL was named the Library of the Future in 2017 by the American Library Association and Information Today Publishing based on its STEAM program, *Digital Climbers*, created for children and young teens. Several Indiana libraries approached MPL with interest in creating their STEAM activities based on the *Digital Climbers* model. MPL assisted several libraries in creating their programs and shared programming training at a variety of state and regional conferences.

MPL shares its online catalog with Muncie Community Schools and Motivate Our Minds, Inc. to increase access of Muncie's children to reading and learning materials. In 2018, at a national conference, we shared our experience with other public library systems with similar projects. Our relationship with MCS and youth-serving organizations in the community continues to grow as we focus on increasing reading and technology literacy in our service area.