



LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY

Strategic Plan
2023-2028

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Letter from the Director and Board Chair

For more than 150 years, Lewis & Clark Library has been providing the citizens of Lewis & Clark County with high-quality collections, programs, and customer service. Trustees and staff plan to continue that tradition into the next 150 years. We are proud to lay the groundwork with this new, dynamic Five-Year Strategic Plan.

The Library's previous Strategic Plan expired at the end of 2022. That plan led us through a pivotal remodel for the Downtown Helena location and provided invaluable guidance in shaping programs, collections, and services. It is our hope that this new Strategic Plan will provide the same kind of guidance and inspiration. We know there are big issues facing libraries now and in the near future: censorship of ideas, stretching of resources, an affordable housing shortage, and a growing mental health crisis are all factors affecting our communities.

Each of the four goals in this plan will help guide us through decision-making and action steps in addressing the above issues. These four goals are: Library Facilities; Collections and Programs; Marketing and Public Awareness; and Staff Engagement. Each of the goals have objectives and activities that will improve the quality of services we provide to our communities.

This plan took shape with much hard work from staff members and Trustees, as well as with input from more than 500 community members and local community leaders. Also, guiding us along this planning process was our outside consulting firm Communication Management Services (CMS). We thank them for their expertise and guidance.

The Library provides a place of community in each of our locations. We marvel at the use of the facilities in Helena, Lincoln, Augusta, and East Helena, and we are continually inspired by the outreach we provide on our Bookmobile and Book Bike. We will continue to provide innovative collections and programs at welcoming facilities for a long time to come, and this plan will ensure our success.

Warmly,



John Finn, Library Director and Judy Meadows, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees

Our Vision

The Lewis & Clark Library fosters the spirit of exploration, the joy of reading, and the pursuit of knowledge for our community.

Our Mission

The mission of the Lewis & Clark Library is to provide the best possible services and materials for informational, educational, cultural, or recreational use by the community.

Our Guiding Principles

Public Trust · Accessibility and Openness · Diversity · Quality of Services · Outreach and Partnership · Knowledge and Learning · Intellectual Freedom · Love of Reading · Information and Literacy · Creativity and Innovation

Planning Process

In the spring of 2023, the Library engaged with consulting group Communication and Management Services (CMS) to begin creating a new Strategic Plan.

Starting with staff and Trustee surveys, we wanted to discover the following: future aspirations for Lewis & Clark County, challenges facing our communities, and ideas to bridge the gap between aspirations and challenges.

After completing the internal surveys, we launched an online community survey and received over 500 responses. The community echoed many of the same aspirations of staff and Trustees, and also shared their most valued Library services. Community members asked Library staff to focus Library resources in the following areas:

- Improving Library facilities to better serve our communities
- Expanded programs for all ages
- Addressing the needs of underserved and changing populations

After incorporating the findings into our plan goals and activities, we shared our Strategic Plan's final draft with local organizations serving the community. Library Leadership held a focus group and asked agency representatives the following questions:

- What resonates with you from the Library's new Strategic Plan?
- What are you working on right now in your organization?
- What issues are you facing now and in the future?
- How can we deepen each other's efforts?

The resulting conversations strengthened our connection to local organizations and created new avenues for collaboration and partnership. As the Library works to implement new projects and reach our goals, we will build on these connections to ensure that everyone in our communities can access essential resources and services at the Library.



Goals & Strategies

GOAL 1: LIBRARY FACILITIES

Improve Library facilities to ensure equity of access

- 1.1 Improve all branches to meet community needs.
- 1.2 Explore options to expand access and the reach of Library services.
- 1.3 Improve safety, security and accessibility of Library facilities.

GOAL 2: PROGRAMS & COLLECTIONS

Enhance existing services and explore new programs & collections

- 2.1 Provide accessible, relevant, and engaging programs and events.
- 2.2 Identify outreach and program partnership opportunities.
- 2.3 Continue to ensure access to diverse collections.

GOAL 3: MARKETING & PUBLIC AWARENESS

Increase community engagement & awareness of Library services

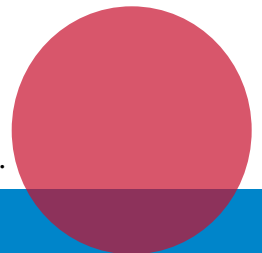
- 3.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan.
- 3.2 Increase Library visibility at community events.

GOAL 4: STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Reshape internal Library culture & leadership

- 4.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive leadership system.
- 4.2 Develop and implement an internal diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) plan.
- 4.3 Create staff support programs that nurture a diverse team.
- 4.4 Build a multifaceted staff development program.

The Library will keep yearly internal action plans, available upon request.



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Focus Group

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Friendship Center
Good Samaritan
Habitat for Humanity
Helena Area Chamber of Commerce
Helena Civic Center
Helena College & Library
Helena Indian Alliance
Montana Legal Services Association
Prickly Pear Land Trust

Board of Trustees

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