



MPL 2020

Our Plan for the Future

Introduction

MPL 2020 is a customer-driven plan that provides strategic, relevant, and forward-looking library services to our city. Based upon an analysis of current use, demographics, input from community leaders, staff experience, research, and market segmentation data, we better understand our customers and how they use our libraries. And, we have a better understanding of how we are viewed by the community and the steps we need to take to improve our relationships. In response, we have redrawn our library service areas, updated our branch library service plans, and developed three broad outcomes that will be accomplished through eight citywide strategies. We will continue to provide high-quality library services through print and electronic collections, reference and research assistance, and successful and relevant services to young children and youth. We will support adults in their search of jobs, education, recreation, and a better quality of life. And we will develop new services for teens and the Spanish-speaking community. We will do this by aligning staff and resources to assure we are successful in fulfilling our Outcomes.

We will build upon our successful and relevant services by targeting three broad market segment groups that were identified using market segmentation data: Young Families, Global Roots, and Traditional Living.

- Young Families - representing about 233,000 people of varying races and ethnicities, are hardworking families with young children, with the same high hopes and dreams for their kids' future.
- Global Roots – representing about 125,000 people, who have recently immigrated from around the globe, but of mostly Hispanic heritage. They are young families working hard to achieve the American Dream; many are already home owners.
- Traditional Living – representing approximately 79,000 people, these are mostly middle age married couples, some with children still at home, who raised their families here

Using data we have compiled about existing and prospective customers in each of these groups, we will prepare new individual plans of service for each of the library's 13 locations that meet the unique, local conditions of the designated library service area. For example, in library service areas with high densities of Young Families, services will be developed to address their unique needs. Where Global Roots segments are particularly concentrated, we will expand services to the Spanish-speaking community. In areas where Traditional Living segments are located, we will continue to offer traditional services with an emphasis on collections.

Vision

MPL is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee.

Mission

Inspiration starts here – we help people read, learn, and connect

Organizational Values

Creating a City of Readers and Lifelong Learners

21st Century Literacies: Print, digital, financial, health

Anchoring Healthy and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Safe and connected, successful business districts, good quality of life, cultural respect

Contributing to a Strong Milwaukee

Strong economy and job market, informed and educated workforce, thriving families

Workplace Values

To meet the great expectations of our customers,
these values guide, inspire, and nourish us:

PASSION, INNOVATION, AND EXCELLENCE

Outcomes

Customer Outcomes

- Milwaukee is a city of readers and its residents are supported throughout their lives in the pursuit of education, 21st Century Literacies and improved economic stability
- Services align with the needs, interests, and concerns of our customers
- Digital Inclusion increases
- Use of library services by previously underserved market segments increases

Community Outcomes

- The library is a Third Place, a community gathering place, that fosters community dialog and development through programs and services
- Library representatives are out and among the community as leaders and resources contributing to positive change and growth
- Community partnerships are the basis for all successful initiatives

Organizational Outcomes

- Data and evidence-based approaches are the primary basis for decision-making and evaluation in all service and operation functions
- The good is not sacrificed for the perfect. Strategic risk-taking and learning through experience is incorporated into the organizational culture and professional development
- Organizational structure and budget are aligned with customer, community, and organizational outcomes
- Ours is a library system others seek to emulate

Citywide Strategies

Traditional Reading and Research Services

At the foundation of our mission is the fundamental activity of providing information to people with broad and deep collections that represent the wide-range of thinking in all areas of interest and through professional information activities provided by librarians via the Internet, phone, in libraries, and through emerging technologies. We will:

- **Develop Collections** to provide current materials that are in demand and to collect materials for inclusion in the Resource Library
- **Help through Reference Service** to assist in accessing resources and services
- **Check out Materials** to maximize lending and use of the collection
- **Maximize Public Service Hours** to provide the highest level of access to services possible
- **Offer Cultural Programming and Exhibits** to promote unique library resources
- **Develop the Resource Library** to provide long-term access to special collections

21st Century Literacies

Today's society requires enhanced skills to thrive in an increasingly information based culture. Supportive library programming targets early childhood, financial, health, and social/cultural literacies to better equip children and adult learners with the tools they need to succeed. We will:

- **Prioritize Early Literacy Services** to develop lifelong readers and prepare children for school.
- **Strengthen School Age Services** to encourage the value of reading through innovative and fun programming for grade school children.
- **Create Civic & Social Literacy Services** to reduce cultural and language barriers to accessing library services, particularly for new immigrants and Spanish-speaking community members.
- **Continue Financial Literacy Services** to provide people with the knowledge and tools to make informed and sound financial decisions.
- **Enhance Health Literacy Services** to empower people in their personal health management.

Technology and Digital Inclusion

MPL provides a broad spectrum of initiatives from providing computer skills education to digitizing local collections. An increasingly digitized world requires new knowledge, practice and access to technology. The library is positioned to provide a broad spectrum of hardware and software support for increasing digital literacies. It is also ideally positioned to develop digital literacy skills that are so critical in this economy. Because of the importance of this “literacy” it is included in this section. We will:

- **Promote Digital Inclusion** to ensure all Milwaukeeans are aware of and have access to the wealth of information available through the Internet.
- **Continue Computer Training** to provide equal opportunities for basic computer skills.
- **Identify future trends** to ensure library users have access to important mainstream technology
- **Invest in Infrastructure** to ensure robust and technology-rich library environments

Workforce Development & Business Growth

MPL locations are a hub of resources for the community. By hosting regular Job Labs, Small Business Resources and Patent classes as well as providing premium database content, MPL contributes to economic and employment growth in Milwaukee. MPL librarians have forged partnerships with community agencies to further provide access to business information. We will:

- **Increase Access to Job Labs** to accommodate the demand by people seeking available jobs and successful employment.
- **Increase Small Business Resources & Outreach** to support small business growth and creation.

Community Engagement and Leadership

The Milwaukee Public Library will expand beyond its four walls and bring library services to neighborhoods by engaging with residents, neighbors and communities. The library will establish itself as a community stakeholder, thought-leader, and resource for community initiatives, leading to neighborhood improvement and stability. We will:

- **Support Community Engagement Activities and Board Participation** to establish the Milwaukee Public Library as a valued resource and thought-leader
- **Develop a Volunteer Corps** to expand the capacity of staff and to strengthen community support
- **Develop New Customers** through partnership development to build awareness of library services and meet the needs of the community

Out-of-School Learning for Teens

Engaging teens and adolescents requires age-specific programs and resources that are not only engaging, but fun. The Library will develop programs, collections, spaces and initiatives to encourage adolescents and teens to engage in reading, creative development, and learning opportunities outside of the school setting. Out-of-School learning initiatives will utilize emerging technologies and strategies such as gamification, which applies game design thinking to non-game applications to make them more fun and engaging, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS). We will:

- **Initiate Technology Programming** to engage adolescents and teens in gamification and other technology-based learning opportunities
- **Promote Online Learning** to improve school outcomes through increased library use by this targeted age group
- **Create Teen Only Spaces** to encourage use by middle and high school students and to shift their perspective of the library from a “quiet, stuffy learning institution” to a safe gathering place where they feel at home to try new technologies, be creative, read for fun, and meet friends.

Community Third Place

Every person has a third place, that place between home and work that serves as an “anchor” of community life and facilitates and fosters creative, social interactions. The Library will further establish itself as an anchor of healthy neighborhoods by creating awareness, fostering community dialog and being the place neighbors find connections, resources, recreation, and technology. We will:

- **Define New Policies and Operational Changes** to promote MPL as a Third Place
- **Create New Customer Service Models** to support Third Place principals
- **Implement Branch Building Program** to complete the library’s facilities plan, Rethinking Libraries for the 21st Century

- **Design Libraries as Meeting Places and Learning Commons** to encourage collaboration and community building
- **Continue Library Maintenance & Restoration Projects** to ensure libraries are inviting, welcoming, and safe.

Resource Alignment & Organizational Development

MPL has the potential to be a world-class library. While financial resources are limited, we start this new plan from a position of strength. We have great employees, successful services, increasing use of collections and services, investments in library buildings and new approaches to library design. We have an engaged Board, an active Foundation, a supportive City Council, and a Mayor who cares about Milwaukee. To capitalize on these strengths, we will:

- **Align staff positions and resources** to ensure we have the capacity to achieve our outcomes.
- **Create metrics for each strategy and tactics** to enable us to measure success to clearly communicate our progress using a dashboard.
- **Design and adopt a team approach** to services and operations
- **Develop staff development programs** for new skill sets
- **Modify organization chart/structure** to align with outcomes

Next Steps

Implementing MPL 2020 - Our Plan for the Future will uniquely integrate the eight citywide strategies described above into each the library service area plans of service. Plan implementation focuses on three elements:

1. Citywide Strategies – library administrators, working closely with library managers and staff, will identify the locations that would significantly benefit from the implementation of citywide strategies. At least one citywide strategy in each of the categories listed above will be slated for implementation with measures to track results.

3. Library Service Area Projects – in the first year, each library service area will implement two selected initiatives based upon the library’s service area plan. Projects will be thoughtfully implemented, taking into account the local target audience, the most effective methods for communicating with them, and measuring results on an on-going basis. Lessons learned will be communicated across the library system in order model success and to make timely adjustments as needed.

3. Capacity Building and Staff Alignment – delivering more effective services starts with a responsive library staff that is in tune with the unique needs of each library service area, professionally exemplifies the values of passion, innovation, and excellence, and seeks continual growth and improvement. The next six years...to 2020...will be an exciting time of change for the Milwaukee Public Library, fully becoming a customer driven organization, earning a leadership role in helping Milwaukeeans build a strong city with vital neighborhoods, and helping people, one on one, to read, learn, and connect.