



Strategic Plan 2022 – 2024

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The Genesee District Library (GDL) is a 19-branch district library system formed in 1980 under the District Libraries Establishment Act 1989 PA 24 (MCL 937.171). GDL serves the residents of Genesee County, Michigan. Our legal service area covers all communities within the county with the exception of the City of Flint, which is served by the Flint Public Library. Besides traditional library services, GDL has a full range of digital services, technology equipment, and programs for all ages.

Over one million visits are made annually to the GDL for books, movies, music, technology and programs. Residents within the service area also have online access to books and music.

In September 2021, the GDL engaged [Fast Forward Libraries](#) to facilitate a strategic planning process that included reviewing data from a series of surveys and holding a series of staff and administrative team roundtable discussions. The surveys, conducted via Survey Monkey, included questions about services, programs, and spaces respondents wanted from the Library in the future. A total of 412 patrons, staff, and partners completed the survey. The data from all three surveys was combined into a Learning Report to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. The Learning Report is included in Appendix 1.

After the staff and administrative teams met, key themes that emerged were structured into a strategic plan to guide the Library over the next three years. The draft plan was reviewed by the Policy Committee in November 2021 and February 2022, and the Board approved the plan in May 2022, staff members will turn their attention to implementing the plan and tracking progress towards meeting plan goals and objectives.

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

To be a community destination for traditional and modern resources, which empower and enrich the communities we serve.

The vision statement articulates the aspiration we hope to achieve in our community and guides our operational decisions. We want to evolve the perception in the community that GDL is “just about books” – it’s so much more than that! The resources we provide empower and enrich the community and continue to change so we can respond to community needs.

MISSION

We will provide our local communities with access to informative, entertaining, educational, and culturally enriching resources, while maintaining a high standard of fiscal responsibility.

The mission statement articulates how we will carry out our work in order to achieve our aspirational vision. The mission communicates to our community what they can expect from their Library and guides staff work on a daily basis. Key to carrying out the mission is providing access to resources and fiscal responsibility.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This plan is divided into four goals with corresponding objectives. The four goals are:

Lifelong Literacy | Meaningful Partnerships

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | Build Capacity

During the staff and administrative team roundtable discussions, the discussion focused on the key ways GDL should move forward to support lifelong learning, expand community partnerships, increase attention to diversity of library resources and services, and create an inclusive and productive staff culture. We want to engage with the community through increased community partnerships, and we will work with underserved populations to better design collections and programs that reflect their needs. Staff and board processes and learning will be prioritized to increase organizational capacity, and we will continue to refine and enhance our traditional literacy services as well as expand technology resources for the community.

GOAL 1: *LIFELONG LITERACY*

Connect people with literacy tools that create opportunities for community members to learn and grow.

Libraries are synonymous with literacy and lifelong learning. Even as our methods for accessing content grow and change, traditional literacy programs and skills are incredibly valuable to our community. We will increase our focus on various forms of digital literacy skills while maintaining traditional programs around early literacy that support families and young children.

OBJECTIVES:

1.1 Focus on early literacy programs and skills to provide a solid foundation for formal education and build a lifelong connection to reading and the Library.

1.2 Focus on technology literacy skills to ensure people have access to tools and support needed to be a global citizen.

1.3 Focus on life skills literacy to help community members successfully navigate the complexity of our world.

GOAL 2: *MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS*

Extend the Library's reach through meaningful and intentional collaborations.

Outreach to our community beyond the library building is a critical part of raising awareness with unserved and underserved community members as well as serving existing patrons in new ways. Expanding partnerships with community organizations will help us better serve a variety of populations in our community while increasing the Library's relevancy and improving public knowledge of our services.

OBJECTIVES:

2.1 Each branch completes an inventory and assessment of current partners.

2.2 Create partner collaboration plans.

2.3 Develop a District-level plan to implement the partner collaboration plans.

GOAL 3: *DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION*

Proactively ensure all library services, collections, and programs consider and respond to the needs and aspirations of the greatest possible diversity of community members.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to everything GDL does and are values that guide our decision-making. The Library helps people develop, supports social progress, and is key for promoting intellectual freedom, democracy, and self-government. Improving the community's understanding of the Library's services, collections, and programs, and our commitment to weaving diversity, equity, and inclusion into our work, is key to carrying out our mission. We aim to increase awareness of the Library's overall value by engaging more intentionally with populations we have not previously reached, promoting the right of everyone to use the Library for free expression and free access. Seeking and utilizing feedback from these community members will aid us in better serving them through more inclusive collections and programs.

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1 Develop a District diversity, equity, and inclusion statement.

- 3.2 Design a process for community-initiated programs and feedback loops.

- 3.3 Re-establish and expand Diversity Task Force (staff and community members) to receive feedback about collections, programs, and services.

GOAL 4: *BUILD CAPACITY*

Cultivate a culture that supports innovation, creativity, maximizing resources, and job satisfaction.

The Library staff are integral to our success. We seek to support a culture of inclusivity and transparency that positively impacts our daily interactions with patrons and community partners. We will cultivate staff feedback and design new team processes with the objectives of improving problem-solving and guiding efforts around training and teamwork. Learning opportunities for trustees will also be cultivated to improve Board engagement and understanding of Library needs.

OBJECTIVES:

4.1 Create a Library culture statement to guide recruitment, training, and a team spirit.

4.2 Enhance Board orientation process and learning opportunities to maximize member knowledge and engagement.

4.3 Develop a tool for peer-sharing about procedure best practices and problem solving.

NEXT STEPS

After this plan is adopted by the Trustees in May 2022, staff will complete the activity plan to guide implementation. Implementation is a continual process, as the timing of certain activities will be determined by priority. Review and adjustment of the activity plan will happen on a regular basis.

As part of implementation, staff will develop an evaluation framework to guide what data will be gathered to show progress towards plan goals and objectives based on recommendations from Fast Forward Libraries. Measurements for each goal will vary, and some activities will be best evaluated by collecting data through patron and community surveys to understand perceptions and satisfaction. Other activities will be evaluated based on information collected in-house such as circulation and usage statistics, program participation, and staff feedback. Some objectives will be met by creating deliverables, like plans for outreach and engagement. Continued reporting of successes and challenges will ensure that the Library is transparent about progress and open to input.

The Library commits to a comprehensive review and update of this plan at its completion. This plan will move the Genesee District Library significantly forward in meeting key community needs and building organizational capacity to provide welcoming presence in the community, both within and outside of our buildings. This plan is an investment in the future of the GDL as a critical asset of the overall community.