



Strategic Plan 2024–2026

Adopted by the
Elkhart Public Library Board of Trustees
May 21, 2024



Welcome to Elkhart Public Library's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

In building this roadmap for the next three years, we gathered input from hundreds of community members, including those who use the library and those who do not. We conducted a public survey, held in-person discussion sessions, conversed with community leaders and partner organizations, and posted key questions on social media.

We also reviewed broad societal, economic, and technological trends as well as community-specific demographic patterns within our library district. Additionally, we examined recent usage patterns in multiple service areas of the Library. Finally, we asked all Library staff for feedback on our mission, vision and values, input on a SWOT analysis, and ideas related to key focus areas identified from the data collected.

Crucial Strategies Consulting of Indianapolis compiled much of the information and provided valuable analyses, guidance, and recommendations during this process.

The four key focus areas on the following pages are interwoven with two primary themes that emerged as we reflected on the information we gathered: *literacy and inclusivity*. In short, *read with everyone*.

These themes shape and prioritize our objectives and goals in a broader sense as well. Elkhart Public Library is committed to building literacy in all its forms, from reading and writing to acquiring foundational skills and knowledge in areas such as media, technology, civics, health, finances, arts, and culture. Further, Elkhart Public Library embraces inclusivity by welcoming people of all backgrounds, beliefs, and life experiences to use the Library's resources, services, and spaces.

From having implemented more than half of our last strategic plan in the midst of a pandemic, we realize anything can happen at any time, requiring us to adjust to new realities. Fortunately, the adaptability and resilience we gained during the last four years will help us move forward on this plan – and pivot if necessary – whatever unexpected circumstances arise.

Thank you for coming on this journey with us!

Lisa Guedea Carreño
Executive Director

James W. Rieckhoff
President, Board of Trustees



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Mission

Elkhart Public Library informs, inspires, and empowers our diverse communities

Vision

**Elkhart Public Library: Helping every person develop their fullest potential
and our diverse communities grow strong and connected**

Core Values

Trust – Respect – Adaptability – Compassion – Teamwork

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Key Focus Area 1: Community Hub and Gathering Place	
<i>Elkhart Public Library will become the preferred gathering place for the diverse communities the library serves.</i>	
Objective A	<p>Demonstrate compassion to all by developing a more personalized, less institutional approach to library work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to literacy, inclusivity, and the library’s core values of trust, respect, adaptability, compassion, and teamwork • Assessment and update of practices related to library use
Objective B	<p>Identify and execute strategies providing welcoming spaces for members of all communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual appeal and cleanliness • Attractive display and presentation of materials • Conversations with communities • Physical accessibility • Customer service improvements
Objective C	<p>Commit to being able to communicate with all guests who visit any library location.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological tools • Conversational skills • Greater staff diversity
Objective D	<p>Complete renovation and expansion of Downtown’s children’s and teen areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility study: creating inviting, interactive, and inclusive spaces • Funding for construction of selected design
Objective E	<p>Conduct a comprehensive space assessment downtown (in addition to renovation and expansion of Downtown’s children’s and teen areas) and implement new features as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential addition of features identified by our communities

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Key Focus Area 2: Community Engagement, Outreach, and Partnerships	
<i>Elkhart Public Library will actively pursue more collaboration opportunities, build new partnerships, and engage with community members in their neighborhoods and community spaces.</i>	
Objective A	<p>Build meaningful relationships to become trusted partners with organizations providing services to address various community needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections/referrals to other service providers in the community • Regular opportunities for other organizations to share information about their services
Objective B	<p>Strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones with agencies and businesses in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library “ambassadors” to potential community partners
Objective C	<p>Invest time and efforts in valuable ways to be present throughout Elkhart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More pop-up library events • Library advisory groups • Mobile computer lab
Objective D	<p>Collaborate with other libraries in mutually-beneficial ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interlocal agreements • Consortial services

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Key Focus Area 3: Programs, Resources, and Services	
<i>Elkhart Public Library will help address community needs through improved and strategic programs, resources, and services.</i>	
Objective A	<p>Expand literacy efforts to create a "community of readers."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the library to new residents • Growing Readers program expansion • Adult basic literacy • Conversations and events about literature • Circulating literacy kits
Objective B	<p>Provide quality, targeted, and sustainable adult programing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of/increase in adult programs related to areas of interest expressed by our communities
Objective C	<p>Provide a circulating collection representing a myriad of voices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection audit • Increase in Spanish-language fiction and non-fiction
Objective D	<p>Explore and, if feasible, provide notary services for the public.</p>
Objective E	<p>Invest in and promote the library as a hub for technology resources and information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More computer and technology training • Assistance and guidance with Artificial Intelligence (AI) • Information/media literacy • Demonstration of librarians' skills

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Key Focus Area 4: Marketing and Promotion	
<i>Communities in the library's service area will become more aware of the services, materials, programs, and other offerings at Elkhart Public Library.</i>	
Objective A	<p>Support community-driven content creation to inspire creativity and reflect the richness of local culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines and best practices for written and video submissions from local residents • Potential space and equipment for small-scale production of local content
Objective B	<p>Sustain employee-driven internal marketing efforts to improve employee knowledge of library news, upcoming events, and available resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant and timely information at customer service points • Real-time information-sharing and updates to all employees • Employee incentives
Objective C	<p>Position EPL as the valued and trusted source for information in the Spanish-speaking community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish-language website • Library presence on preferred communication platforms • Two-way information sharing