



ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

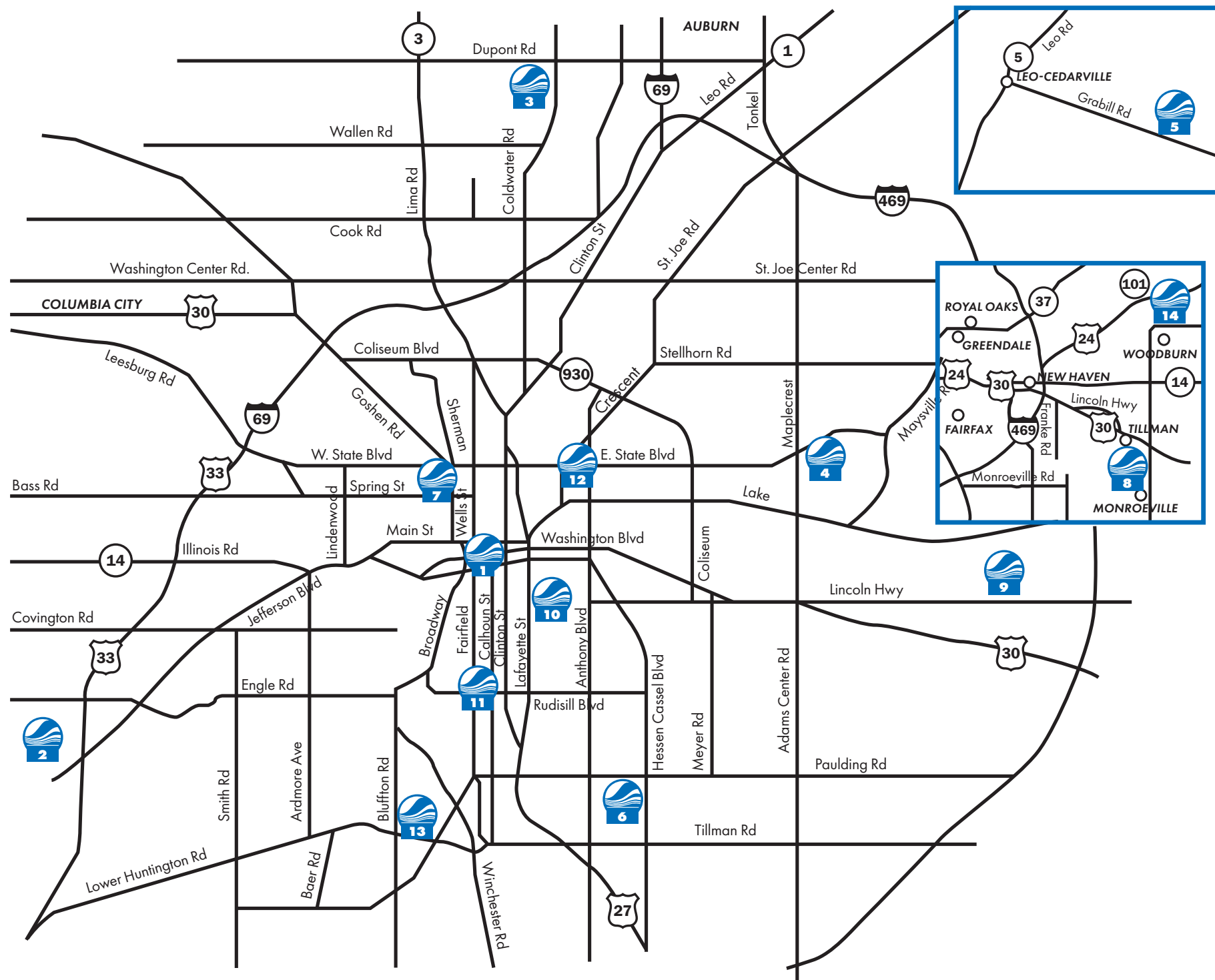


Allen County Public Library

2024-2028 **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Approved by the Allen County Board of Trustees on October 26, 2023

BRANCH LOCATIONS



1 Main

**900 Library Plaza
Fort Wayne, IN 46802**

3 Dupont

536 East Dupont Rd
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

5 Grabill

13521 State St
Grabill, IN 46741

7 Little Turtle

2201 Sherman Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46808

9 New Haven

648 Green St
New Haven, IN 46774

11 Shawnee

**5600 Noll Ave
Fort Wayne, IN 46806**

13 Waynedale

2200 Lower Huntington Rd
Fort Wayne, IN 46819

2 Aboite

**5630 Coventry Ln
Fort Wayne, IN 46804**

4 Georgetown

6600 East State Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46815

6 Hessen Cassel

3030 East Paulding Rd
Fort Wayne, IN 46816

8 Monroeville

115 Main St
Monroeville, IN 46773

10 Pontiac

**2215 South Hanna St
Fort Wayne, IN 46803**

12 Tecumseh

**1411 East State Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46805**

14 Woodburn

4701 State Rd 101 North
Woodburn, IN 46797

To our patrons, neighbors, and community partners:

We are pleased to share with you this overview of our 2024-28 organizational strategic plan that will drive our library's work over the coming years. It is the result of a year of unprecedented response and engagement of our patrons and we extend our deepest appreciation for their commitment to the Allen County Public Library (ACPL). As you read the plan, you may notice that for the first time in the history of the ACPL, the strategic plan now encapsulates not only our mission statement, but also a new vision statement and organizational values. These will be our guideposts that drive us toward our organizational goals and underpin our mission. They are key tools to help us move forward, allocate resources, and focus our energy on building our future library.

As the "People's Palace", we've spent our 125+ years striving to be awe-inspiring, yet accessible – a true source of pride for this community. As we look toward the future, we plan to create an environment where everyone belongs and to serve our loyal lifelong patrons while also engaging new audiences. Each Allen County resident should see themselves mirrored in our diverse collection, enriching services, and enthusiastic staff.

We would like to thank our dedicated staff who have never wavered in their willingness to share their experiences, challenges, and ideas about how to make our library stronger each and every day. We would also like to thank Petra Solutions, Inc., a local consulting firm who worked with us to deepen our understanding of Allen County's growing immigrant and refugee communities. And of course, we would like to thank the thousands of ACPL patrons and community members who participated in the surveys, focus groups, and conversations that have informed this plan. You have called upon us to do great things and now it is time to put that in action. We are up to the task and look forward to opening new windows of opportunities together.

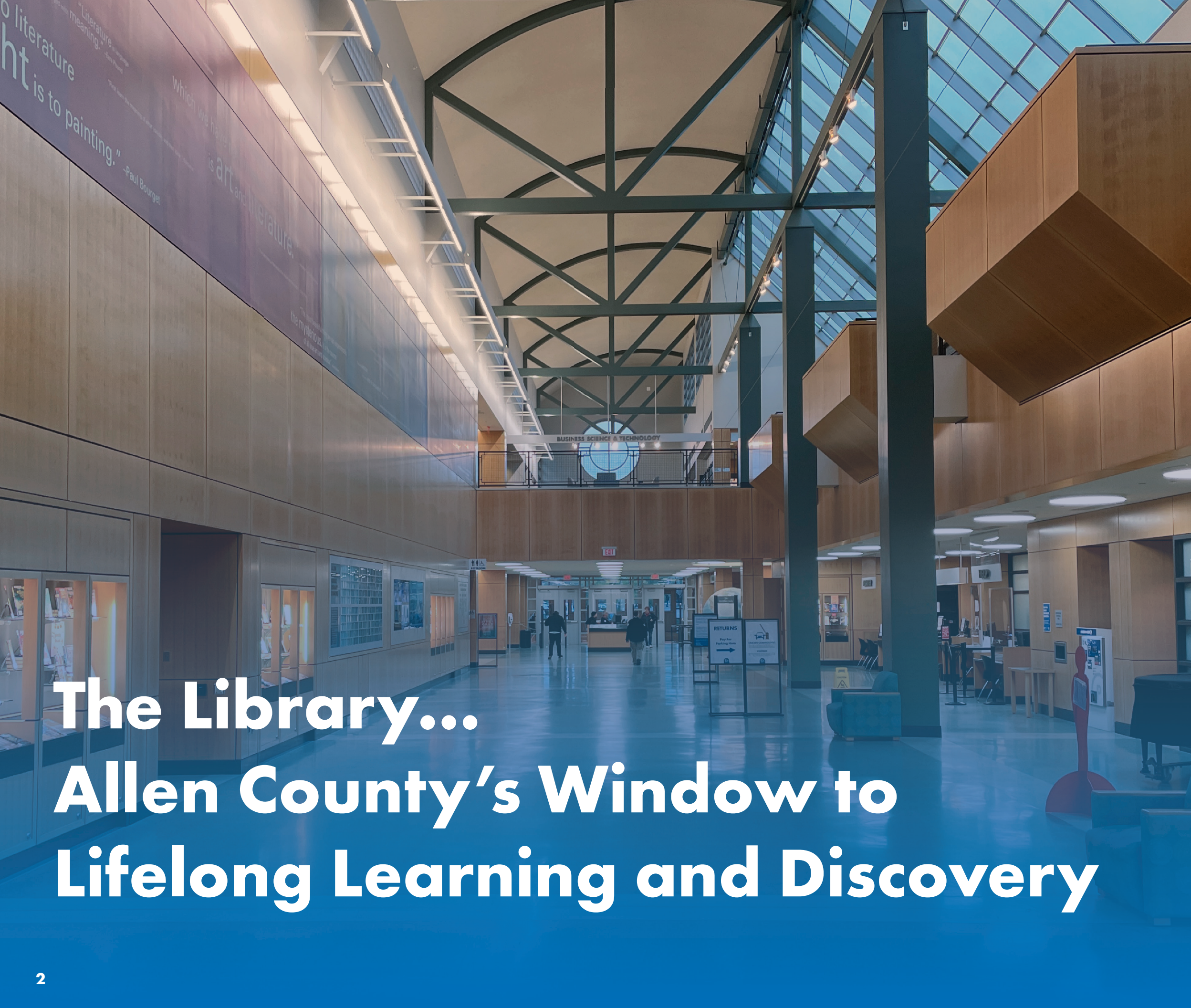
As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions.
Please feel free to share your thoughts at librarydirector@acpl.info.

Susan P. Baier
Executive Director, ACPL

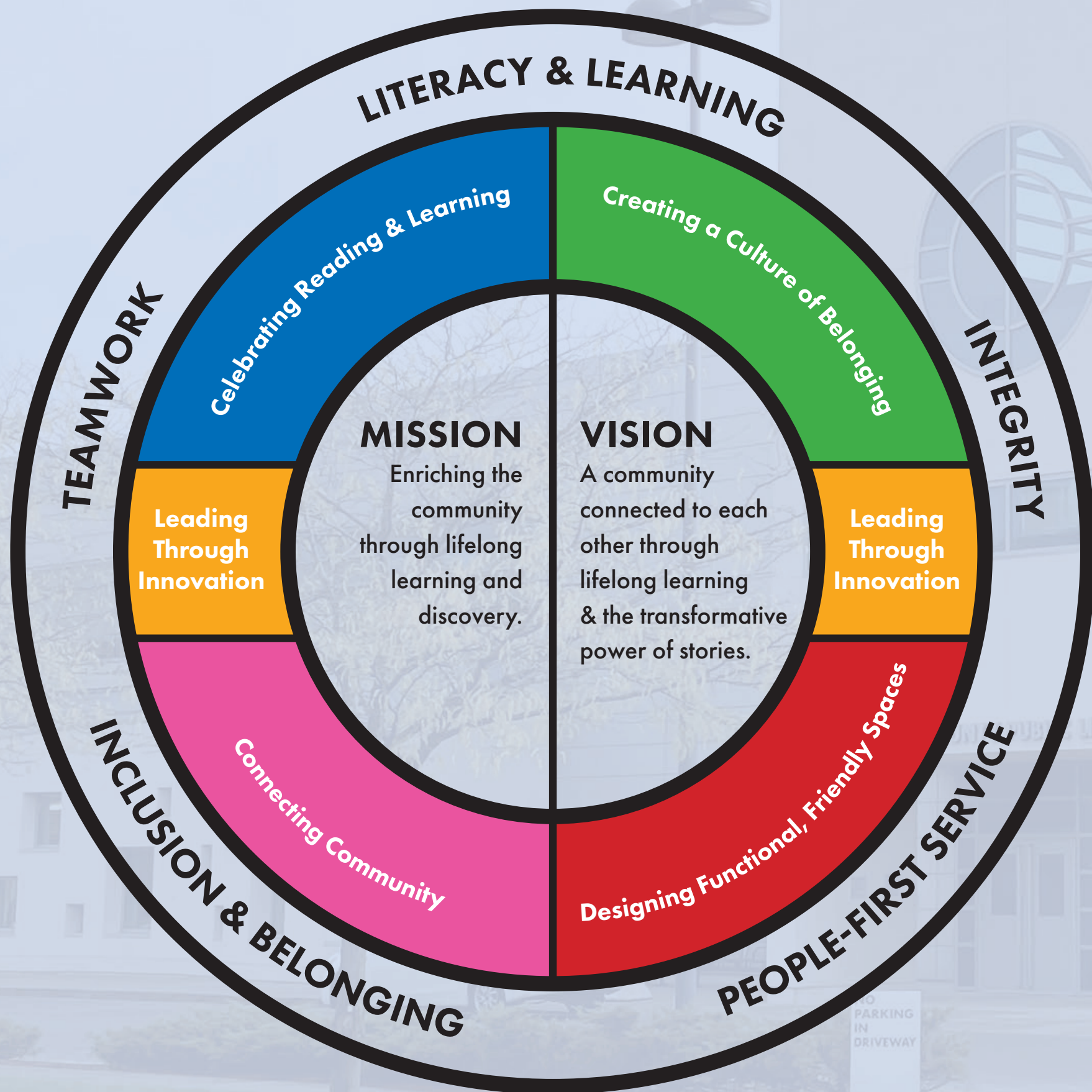
Ben Eisbart
President, ACPL Board of Trustees



Allen County
Public Library



The Library... Allen County's Window to Lifelong Learning and Discovery



OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY

We show integrity through taking responsible actions and providing credible information. We build trust by embracing transparency in our decision-making and acting with purpose.

LITERACY & LEARNING

We develop collections, design programs and services, and create safe and welcoming spaces, to nurture learning, invite personal growth, and create a stronger, more connected community.

PEOPLE-FIRST SERVICE

We strive to create an inviting environment that welcomes patrons again and again. We go the extra mile to meet and exceed patron expectations.

INCLUSION & BELONGING

We recognize, accept, and honor individual differences and needs within our community. We are committed to providing collections, services, and spaces representing and respecting the people we serve.

TEAMWORK

ACPL is an outstanding team. We take care of each other. We seek to be a great place to work. We encourage personal growth for our team members, and it shows in our service to our patrons and our community.

“I’m a first generation American. My library was essential growing up.

Initially we didn’t speak English and having caring librarians who were always willing to help me on how to draft letters for insurance, where to find forms or phone numbers. Answering any question someone else may easily know but we were unaware of. My library was a safe place that offered me essential free services to help improve our lives. I will forever be grateful for our libraries!” - ACPL Patron

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

EVERYONE BELONGS AT THE ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

We are on a mission to recognize, cultivate and celebrate diversity. We offer collections, services, programs, assistance, and spaces that enrich and reflect our community. We are committed to nurturing an inclusive workforce and establishing ourselves as a communal space of respect, safety, and service. All are welcome to pursue lifelong learning and discovery at ACPL regardless of identity, origin, ability, religion, race, culture, socioeconomic status, age, or other differences.



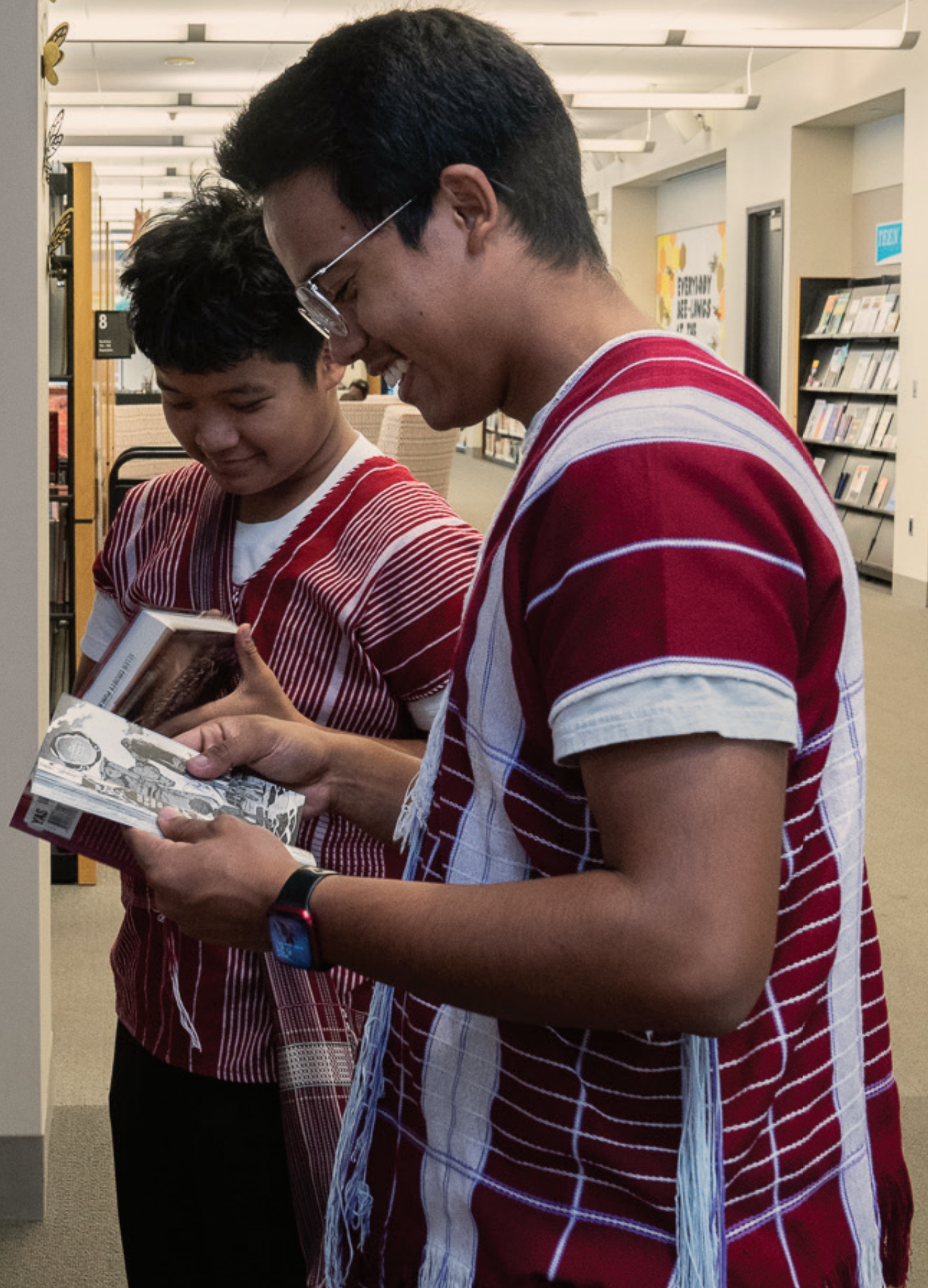
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Allen County Public Library's primary funding source is local property taxes. ACPL also receives local income taxes and miscellaneous revenues that support the operating budget. Available fund balances in the General Fund and other appropriate funds, such as the Library Improvement Reserve Fund and the Rainy Day Fund, allow ACPL to meet its cash flow requirements without having to utilize short-term borrowing instruments.

ACPL staff does pursue grant opportunities when available and appropriate. These grants augment the operating budget to fund special projects and initiatives. In addition, the ACPL Foundation and the Friends of the ACPL generously provide financial support for public programs, outreach, and staff development.

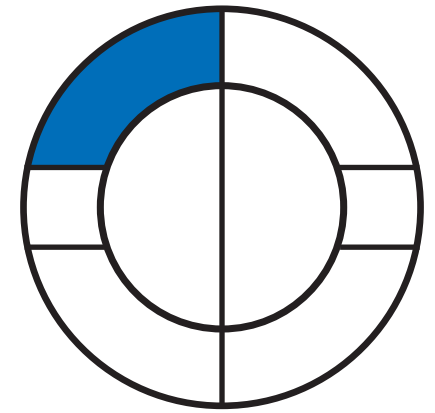
Integrity is among the ACPL organizational values. We show integrity through taking responsible actions and embracing transparency in our financial decision making. Sound fiscal stewardship is a top priority for both the ACPL staff and the Board of Trustees.

ACPL's Annual Certified Financial Reports are posted on the library's website.



CELEBRATING READING AND LEARNING

Through books, hands-on learning, technology, and valuing different perspectives, we celebrate individual and collective stories.



INCREASE FOCUS ON EARLY LITERACY

- *Implement a year-round reading program focused on early literacy*
- *Explore partnerships and offer support to increase in-home access to books, including but not limited to Imagination Library*
- *Expand StoryScapes to all ACPL locations*

A BROAD AND DIVERSE COLLECTION THAT IS A POINT OF PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY

- *Increase communication about the collection to patrons and residents*
- *Expand readers advisory services*
- *Plan for a Big Read/One County One Book event*

EQUITABLE DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY ACCESS TO RESOURCES FOR OUR COMMUNITY

- *Conduct a patron needs assessment*
- *Increase access to technology devices and e-resources through the library's collection and services*
- *Participate in strategic community partnerships focused on digital equity and access*

EXPAND EDUCATION RELATED PROGRAMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

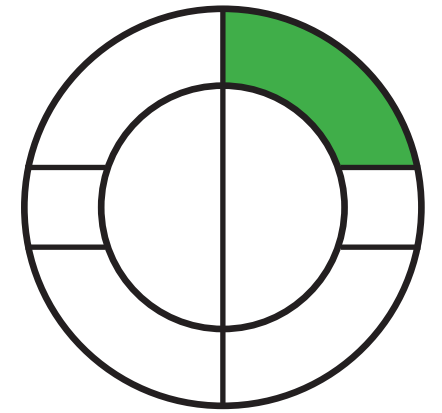
- *Implement year-round Team Read*
- *Expand physical and programmatic Active Learning Environments for all ages, with a focus on STEM/STEAM exploration and connected learning opportunities*
- *Investigate the potential impact of expanded mobile services and pursue opportunities to serve our community outside our buildings*
- *Further develop services and collaborations in support of workforce development, including both skill development for individuals and partnerships that connect people to jobs*
- *Enhance partnerships and library support for small businesses and entrepreneurs*





CREATING A CULTURE OF BELONGING

Through our team, collections, and services, everyone has a home at ACPL.



AN UPDATED AND CONSISTENT SERVICE MODEL AT ALL LOCATIONS TO BEST MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL PATRONS

- Assess the existing service model and explore updated practices and technologies
- Rethink the location, size, and type of service points and how to best staff them to meet patron needs
- Implement updated customer service training for all staff

CONNECTED STAFF, WORKING AS A TEAM, WITH A GREATER SENSE OF BELONGING AT ACPL

- Ensure each staff member understands how their contributions help ACPL serve our community, make an impact, and reach our goals
- Create a culture and a process encouraging staff to share praise for each other
- Grow employee resources groups/staff circles/affinity groups

COLLECTIONS, SERVICES, AND SPACES REPRESENTING OUR COMMUNITY AND REFLECTING ITS DIVERSITY IN CULTURES, ABILITIES, AND LIVED EXPERIENCES

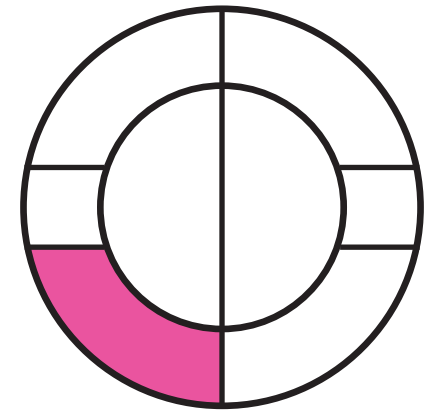
- Research and propose staff bilingual bonus
- Create one or more bilingual Partnerships and Programs Specialist position
- Introduce bilingual Storytimes
- Conduct a diversity audit of the collection
- Audit marketing materials and translate them into other languages, as appropriate
- Ensure ACPL's website, mobile app, marketing materials, signage, and services are in multiple languages
- Celebrate diversity in our community through appropriate displays, marketing materials, reading lists, website showcases, etc

"I find it amazing that there are so many diverse community programs that everyone can find something fun at the library. There are a wide array of interest and age groups being catered to. I've lived in multiple cities in the U.S. and even major metropolitan areas that fall short on engagement compared to ACPL in my opinion." - ACPL Patron



CONNECTING COMMUNITY

Through collaborations with people and organizations, we strengthen our community and extend our reach.



A PROGRAM STRATEGY CENTERING AROUND COMMUNITY VOICES, TALENTS, AND NEEDS

- Create new opportunities for community members and organizations to offer programming through the library
- Develop formal and informal processes for gathering and responding to community input, with an emphasis on special populations (immigrant/refugee, cultural groups, homeschoolers, etc.)
- Grow ACPL's representation on local advisory groups, boards, and coalitions focused on collective impact

EXPANDED ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SCHOOLS

- Increase the number of cardholders to 75 percent of county population
- Implement strategic outreach for special populations (e.g., underserved, immigrant/refugees, senior care facilities)
- Develop and implement a reciprocal marketing process with partners to keep the community informed about ACPL and partner offerings
- Explore the expansion of the Student Success Library Card program to schools throughout Allen County
- Deepen our integration with Title I events, school curricula, and school libraries across the county

INCREASED COLLABORATION BETWEEN ACPL, THE FRIENDS OF ACPL, FRIENDS OF THE LINCOLN COLLECTION, AND THE ACPL FOUNDATION

- Reintroduce the ACPL Gold Card as a Friends fundraiser
- Hold a joint fundraiser/friendraiser between Friends of ACPL and the Literacy Alliance
- Add a merchandise store as a means to fundraise, increase brand awareness for ACPL support groups, and give patrons a way to show their ACPL pride

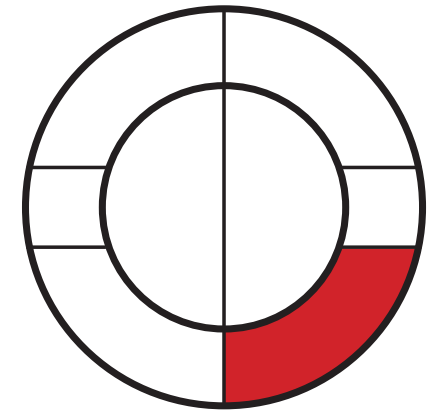
EXPANDED ADVOCACY TO ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Trustees and ACPL leadership sharing information about library programs and services to elected officials





DESIGNING FUNCTIONAL, FRIENDLY SPACES



Through accessible, intuitive, and easy to navigate physical and virtual spaces, our patrons discover all we have to offer.

DESIGN, BUILD, AND MAINTAIN WELCOMING AND USER-FRIENDLY SPACES AND FACILITIES

- *Expand ACPL's Facilities Planning and Design Guidelines to include mechanical elements, updated best practices, and product standards*
- *Redesign entrances and service points to be welcoming, responsive, and efficient*
- *Expand Main Library's Makers Lab and services*
- *Explore new options for food and beverage service/vending at the Main Library and branches*

IMPROVE SIGNAGE TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH AND WAYFINDING FOR PATRONS AT ALL LOCATIONS

- *Finalize a Signage and Wayfinding Plan to apply to all locations*
- *Include multilingual as well as graphical signage*
- *Incorporate digital and other technology-based signage platforms*
- *Practice the use of plain language instead of library jargon*

CONTINUALLY ADVANCE OUR PATRONS' ONLINE EXPERIENCE THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF ACPL'S WEBSITE, MOBILE APP, AND OTHER TECHNOLOGIES AS APPROPRIATE

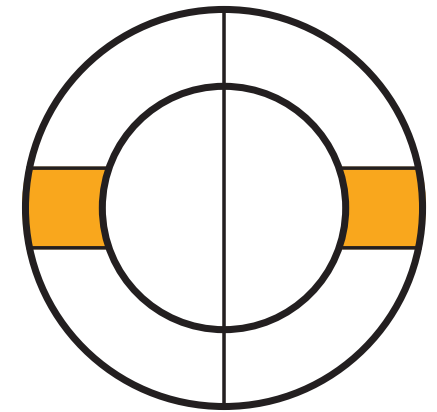
- *Explore options for and implement chat service*
- *Create an online user experience plan focused on identifying inefficiencies, upgrading technology when appropriate, and strategizing around a unified vision*
- *Investigate enhanced online service options available to our patrons (e.g., patron self-check via the mobile app, etc.)*

"ACPL provides an exceptional place for my family members, neighbors, and I to cross paths with a common goal in view – to enjoy learning. Thank you for making quality books, games, shows, and resources free and easily available for use!" - ACPL Patron



LEADING THROUGH INNOVATION

Through sustainable innovation and improvement, we thrive as a library and as a community.



STREAMLINED PATRON ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES

- Utilize ACPL's online tools and resources to enhance the patron experience with automated and just-in-time communication strategies
- Implement improved data analysis and marketing tools to better understand and reach our audiences (e.g., genealogy users, senior citizens, families, etc.)
- Continue to explore and implement technologies providing the community with additional access to services (e.g., 24-7 holds pick-up, Open+, etc.)

EXPANDED GENEALOGY SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

- Explore adding a genealogy outreach vehicle
- Add genealogy programs throughout the community in partnership with library branches and other organizations

EXPANDED ACCESS TO THE ROLLAND CENTER AND THE LINCOLN FINANCIAL FOUNDATION COLLECTION

- Develop partnerships with K-12 educators in all area schools
- Explore new technologies for making more of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection available to individuals throughout the community and beyond

INCREASED SYSTEM-WIDE EFFICIENCIES VIA UP-TO-DATE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

- Assess options and implement improvements to our program and event management system
- Expand the use of Microsoft 365 products
- Improve internal workflows and explore automating rote processes (e.g., adding materials handling in select locations, etc.) to enable staff to spend more time with patrons delivering quality services
- Continue to refine the process of reviewing and purchasing all ACPL technologies across all departments

INCREASED STAFF SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

- Identify and develop staff mentors
- Expand the practice of job shadowing and cross training
- Broaden ACPL cohort groups
- Assess staff career trajectories and assist in their professional development



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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***"I think our county is blessed with the best libraries in the country.
Thank you to all involved and the dedicated persons who help make
our libraries a wonderful experience for all." - ACPL Patron***



Allen County Public Library

ACPL.INFO  @Allen County Library  @acpl_insta