



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2026



INTRODUCTION

This update to the Duluth Public Library's 2016-2020 strategic plan was undertaken in early 2023. DPL experienced major disruptions to services and staffing during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, delaying plans to embark on another full-scale strategic planning process. Now, with the pandemic appearing to recede in the distance and the prospect of a major renovation ahead of us, a planning team was assembled to review the library's prior plan and update it for the next three years.

DPL's strategic plan update is the result of staff surveys, individual interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, and focus groups made up of key constituencies in the community. It was put together with much thought and valuable input from members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

On behalf of the library, thank you to everyone who helped create this plan. It represents the good work of people who care deeply about the Duluth community and want to see the Duluth Public Library continue to contribute in new and innovative ways to the community's success.

Carla Powers,
Library Manager

MISSION

The Duluth Public Library strengthens our community by promoting the love of reading and life-long discovery, helping ensure children are ready and excited to learn, offering robust connections to the digital world, and providing a creative and welcoming environment for all.

VISION

The Library is recognized throughout the community as an invaluable resource in providing reading, early literacy, lifelong learning, digital access, and creative and cultural materials and services.

GOAL 1:

Increase Access to & Use of the Library

STRATEGIES:

- Address ongoing and perceived security issues, prioritizing efforts at Main Library, to ensure that all patrons and staff feel welcome and safe
- Expand promotion of the Library, especially through direct outreach into the community, to raise awareness of all three facilities, digital resources, and the breadth of Library services
- Improve Library facilities:
 - Add more private meeting spaces of varied sizes that are pleasant and have up-to-date technology
 - Explore better options for parking at the Main Library and West Duluth Branch
 - Enhance the visual appeal of Library buildings, both inside and out, to provide a welcoming environment
 - When feasible, increase sustainable, green practices in Library buildings and vehicles
- Explore possible realignment of open hours to meet changing community needs

GOAL 2:

Enhance Current Library Services to Evolve with the Community

STRATEGIES:

- Continue to improve services for teens and schoolchildren, notably by increasing intentional teen spaces and diversifying teen program offerings
- Champion strengthened senior services to increase engagement and decrease social isolation
- Develop more extensive use of the Little Library Go van, to include additional outreach to seniors and into currently under-served neighborhoods
- Improve arts and enrichment programs, especially for adults, to position the Library as a leading free cultural center in the community
- Advance the Library's standing as a regional genealogy and history research center
- Review the usability of the Library's website, and plan for subsequent improvements to its content and design
- Create a plan to develop a community tech hub at the Main Library for both individuals and businesses and explore ways to share these resources at branches and through outreach
- Add programming, events and resources, such as an expanded "Library of Things," to further the community's commitment to a more sustainable future

GOAL 3:

Intensify Efforts to Increase the School Readiness of Duluth's Children

STRATEGIES:

- Focus efforts on leveraging/engaging existing early literacy community partners
- Grow funding for school readiness efforts and explore ways of building additional Library staff capacity for this campaign

GOAL 4:

Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to Better Reflect the Duluth Community

STRATEGIES:

- More fully empower our diverse community by involving them in decision making related to collections, programs, facilities, outreach and partnerships
- Continue diversification of Library staff and leadership through hiring, training, and professional development
- Through partnerships, foster additional supports for under-resourced individuals and households

GOAL 5:

Increase Library Support and Maximize Efficiencies in Current Resources

STRATEGIES:

- Support advocacy efforts by the Library Board, Foundation, Friends and other partners to increase public funding and support
- Continue internal dialogues with City leaders to grow support for the Library, including funding for high-quality facilities and adequate staff
- Provide additional resources and supports for staff to improve the overall work environment
- Collaborate with the Foundation and Friends to maximize private support for the Library
- Develop a broader, system-wide approach to the supported self-service model, to further allow staff to focus on community service goals

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

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