



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023–2026

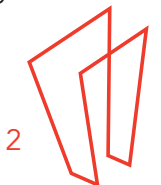
STRATEGIC PLAN

WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW

For people all around the world, including our local community, the COVID-19 pandemic brought a number of serious challenges: illness; the loss of friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues; a reduction or loss of job stability, income, and benefits tied to employment; an increase in social isolation at home and at work; a sharp learning curve with online technology; and the emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion from caring for others and oneself during a period of prolonged uncertainty and confusion.

The crisis also exacerbated harsh, long-standing inequities in healthcare, education, employment, and housing experienced by historically marginalized groups. The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota further elevated awareness of a racial justice movement that continues to shape the public discourse surrounding practically every aspect of life and society.

At the library, 2020 also marked the beginning of a large-scale renovation project which entirely reimagined all of the public spaces on the first and second floors. Construction began two months before we were forced into a prolonged emergency closure. Though the project was ultimately completed on-time and under-budget, we had to navigate a series of delays and disruptions in service due to operational guidelines and restrictions from local, state, and federal authorities. This was especially difficult because, for many, the physical library is a refuge, an oasis, a life-changing resource for learning and growth, and a connection point to be with and among others.

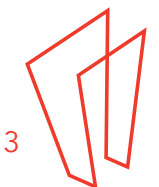


STRATEGIC PLAN

WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW

Yet three years later, many people in the community still may not have returned and experienced what the newly-renovated library has to offer. We are still discovering and developing new ways to serve people in the building, online, and out in the community. The library now has a unique opportunity to stand alongside our local community and play a vital role in how we all emerge from the extraordinary times we've experienced.

Through reflection, discussion, data gathering, and analysis, a committee of staff and Trustees came together with community partners and patrons to develop this strategic plan, and we gratefully acknowledge their contributions. The plan gives us an opportunity to reexamine our vision, mission, values, and priorities. It is critical that we regularly examine ourselves and adapt to our local community's current aspirations and challenges, changing societal values and human experiences, advances in technology, and developments within the broader library field. Through the past three years we have persevered and remained responsive in the face of unprecedented change. With this strategic plan, we will build on this progress, guiding library staff in their work, and inspiring others to engage with us in a thriving community and library.



STRATEGIC PLAN

WHERE WE ARE HEADING

Our vision, mission, values, and focus areas provide a roadmap for understanding ourselves and our work as we pursue our goals over the next three years.

VISION

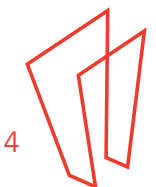
The vision statement speaks to our hope for the future of Skokie, as well as the library's essential role in helping the community reach that destination.

Skokie Public Library is the heart of a vibrant village where people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures engage in lifelong learning and discovery while actively participating in the life of the community.

MISSION

The mission statement serves as the primary goal of the library and lays down a path for what the library will do to help achieve the vision for the community.

As a springboard for personal growth and community development, Skokie Public Library promotes discovery, enrichment, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas through a broad spectrum of resources and experiences.



STRATEGIC PLAN

WHERE WE ARE HEADING

VALUES

We affirm the enduring professional values of librarianship¹, including access, confidentiality and privacy, democracy, diversity, education, equity, inclusiveness, intellectual freedom, lifelong learning, service, and social responsibility.

We are also guided by four core organizational values, which help us understand our identity and frame our work:

Community

Our efforts will have a larger impact when we intentionally center them on the aspirations and lived experience of the people in our community.

Collaboration

We are most effective when we develop relationships and work in concert with our community, colleagues, and partners.

Compassion

We support the well-being of every person, especially those who are the least privileged, rooting our actions in equity and respect for human dignity.

Curiosity

We cultivate an open-minded and creative environment that encourages everyone to explore new experiences, ideas, information, and questions.

¹These are expressed in the American Library Association Core Values of Librarianship Statement, the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the American Library Association Code of Ethics

STRATEGIC PLAN

WHERE WE ARE HEADING

FOCUS AREAS

Over the next three years, we will prioritize work in the following focus areas. Although they do not capture every possible aspect of what we do at the library, they serve as the framework for enhancing existing work and developing new initiatives. They ground us in the context of where we have come from and what we need to do, and guide us towards the specific outcomes we hope to see in our community over the next three years and beyond. We will track and be accountable for our progress in this work.

Cultivating Connectedness and Belonging

We will work towards a community where everyone feels seen, accepted, supported, and valued; a community where people can express their true selves, and where their voices are heard and have an impact; a community where everyone can better understand themselves and others, find purpose, kinship, connection, and involvement.

Providing Services that Resonate

The renovation created an opportunity for us to refine and redesign our approach to core library services. Through robust and inclusive communication, expansive collections, diverse events, accessible spaces, and wide-reaching services, we will meet people where they are and offer dynamic and responsive opportunities for learning, growing, discovery, and enjoyment.

Building a Healthy Organization

Everything that we aspire to achieve starts with our staff. We will develop our internal culture so that everyone working here can help foster a positive and respectful workplace where there are opportunities to develop skills and follow career aspirations, voice ideas and have agency in the work, have contributions recognized and celebrated, connect with colleagues across the library, and be supported.

