



The  
INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC  
Library



2021 - 2023  
**Strategic Plan**

Approved by The Indianapolis Public Library Board of Trustees on February 22, 2021



# Indianapolis – Navigating a new crossroads...

Coming out of a year where the Covid-19 pandemic created great uncertainty and so many challenges, we are more reflective than ever about what really matters here in Indianapolis. How can we build a city that is fair and just—a city with opportunity for all, that is not limited by one’s zip code or skin color? We have been having long overdue conversations about the work required to embrace our diversity and equip all citizens with access to the education, employment, and healthcare that will spell success for every family. Clearly the Indianapolis community needs resources and trusted institutions that can assist everyone on this journey, and the public library is poised to provide those resources in an atmosphere of trust and engagement for all who travel this path.

We offer here, in this Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, resources and direction for the journey. We are clear and committed to the mission statement that pledges to enrich everyone and strengthen the community by inspiring lifelong learning. Our values are intentional and right for the times, and our strategic priorities have been identified based on extensive community analysis, input, and discussion. We share the citywide commitment to diversity and racial equity, and in true Indianapolis fashion, we understand that partnerships will be key to our most successful work.

The Library and several other institutions offer ever-evolving resources with new digital tools and products, which has placed added emphasis on digital/technology literacy. With literacies understood as capabilities beyond traditional reading and writing, we have identified other priority areas such as health and wellness and financial literacy to proactively offer Indy residents opportunities to learn and live their best lives.

We are here to meet the needs of each and every neighborhood, with libraries that are welcoming and accessible, and online services that bring the library to you wherever and whenever you need it.

An informed community, where a child’s first library card opens the door to a world without limits, will help to ensure that Indianapolis will rise from the challenges of 2020’s uncertainty and embrace the opportunities ahead with great confidence. We can do this Indianapolis...together!



- Judge Jose Salinas, *Library Board President*



- M. Jacqueline Nytes, *Library CEO*





## Our Values

### **Racial Equity** – *“Leading with Race by Being Race Explicit, Not Race Exclusive”*

Prioritizing the impact of race and intersectional identities that impact the lived experiences of the community and staff such that one’s identity can no longer be used as a predictor of how one fares

### **Adaptability** – *“Ready for Progress”*

Being proactive, nimble, and innovative, with the flexibility to anticipate and respond to change quickly and positively

### **Communication** – *“Listening and Sharing”*

Listening actively and ensuring an equitable and timely flow of information to and from patrons and colleagues that is clear, consistent, honest, open, and respectful

### **Diversity** – *“Embracing Uniqueness”*

Recognizing and valuing all the ways in which people differ, both seen and unseen, while embracing all the characteristics that make one individual or group different from or the same as another

### **Inclusiveness** – *“Acknowledging and Addressing Biases”*

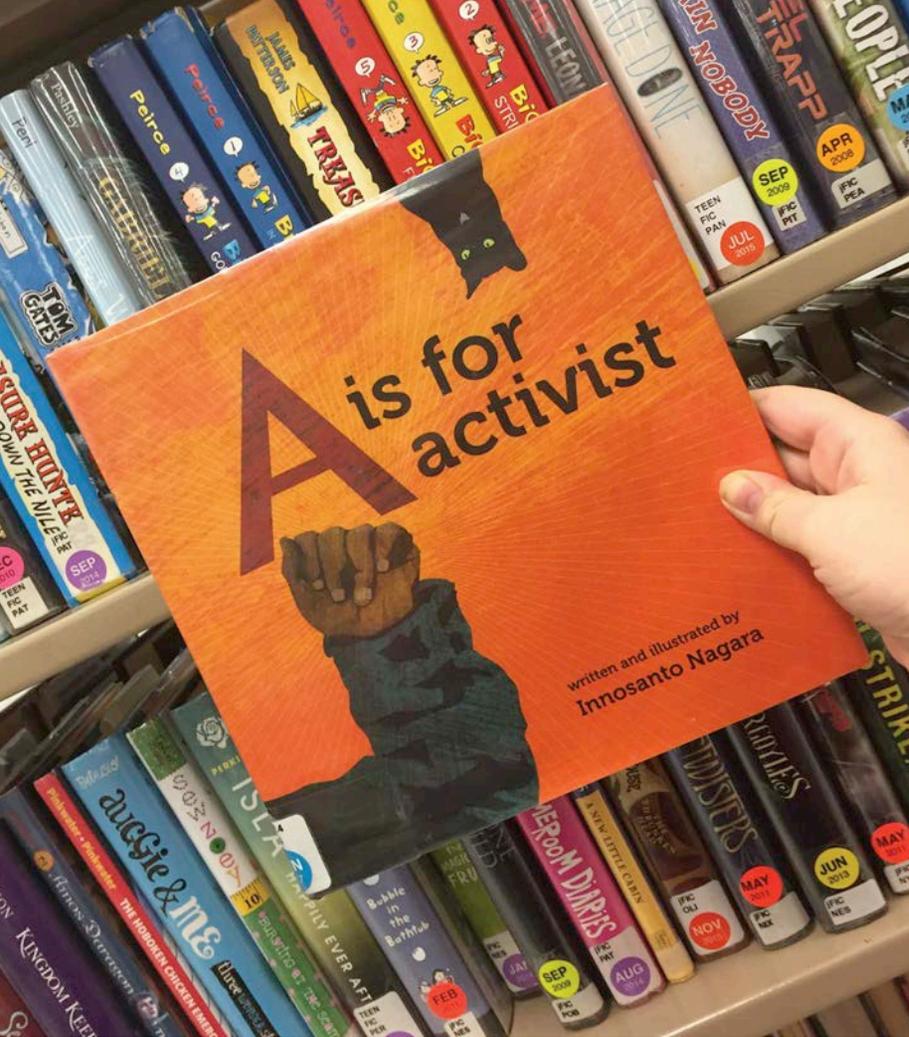
Fostering an environment, collection, and services where everyone is treated fairly and where all are valued

# Strategic Priorities

## Racial Equity

The importance of racial equity continues to be a central conversation in Indianapolis and communities around the U.S. The Indianapolis Public Library (IndyPL) acknowledges the work ahead needed to improve racial equity efforts within the organization and in the community by listening and providing a platform to continue the conversation and improve opportunities and outcomes for everyone. We will utilize the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) framework prioritizing the importance of being “race explicit, not race exclusive,” thereby emphasizing the importance of working through an intersectional lens. We will be mindful of areas of overlapping marginalization (race, gender, socioeconomic, language, ability, etc.) that impact the lived experiences of our community and staff and contribute to disproportionate outcomes.

As part of our efforts around racial equity, IndyPL will utilize an adaptation of GARE’s Racial Equity Toolkit. The Toolkit contains a series of questions to “integrate explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions, including policies, practices, programs, and budgets. It is both a product and a process. Use of a racial equity tool can help to develop strategies and actions that reduce racial inequities and improve success for all groups” (GARE, 2016).



## Racial Equity Strategic Objectives

- Create a more diverse collection by designating a specific amount of the annual collection budget for African American (30%), Latinx (10%), and LGBTQ+ (5%) materials.
- Apply the IndyPL Racial Equity Toolkit in designing 100% of programs annually.
- Increase vendor diversity by updating processes and enhancing outreach to ensure 27% of annual vendor expenditures are paid to city certified XBEs.
- Increase staff diversity by spending 50% of the annual recruitment budget on diverse recruitment efforts.
- Continually and intentionally work toward an organization where racial equity is embedded in our culture.



## Partnerships

Partnerships are central to effectively delivering resources and programs to the Indianapolis community. The Indianapolis Public Library is committed to enriching our relationships with our current partners and developing new partnerships around the city to enhance and supplement the exceptional grassroots and educational work underway in the community.

### Partnerships Strategic Objectives

- Engage and collaborate with educators to create semi-annual youth-focused marketing aimed at increasing youth awareness of the Library and its resources.
- Create partnerships with culturally diverse community members, leaders, and organizations on at least 75% of our Community Action Plans annually through outreach and engagement.
- Intentionally seek input, collaboration, and feedback from community leaders to ensure we are meeting the needs of the diverse Indianapolis community.



# Information and Literacies

Providing access to all available Information and resources for multiple literacies is a central function of all public libraries. Through the continued development of our physical and electronic collections, programming, partnerships, and initiatives, The Indianapolis Public Library will provide access to information resources and intentionally develop resources to promote continued and improved literacy of all types with a focus on the following five areas for 2021-2023:

**Digital/Technology**

**Education**

**Reading and Writing**

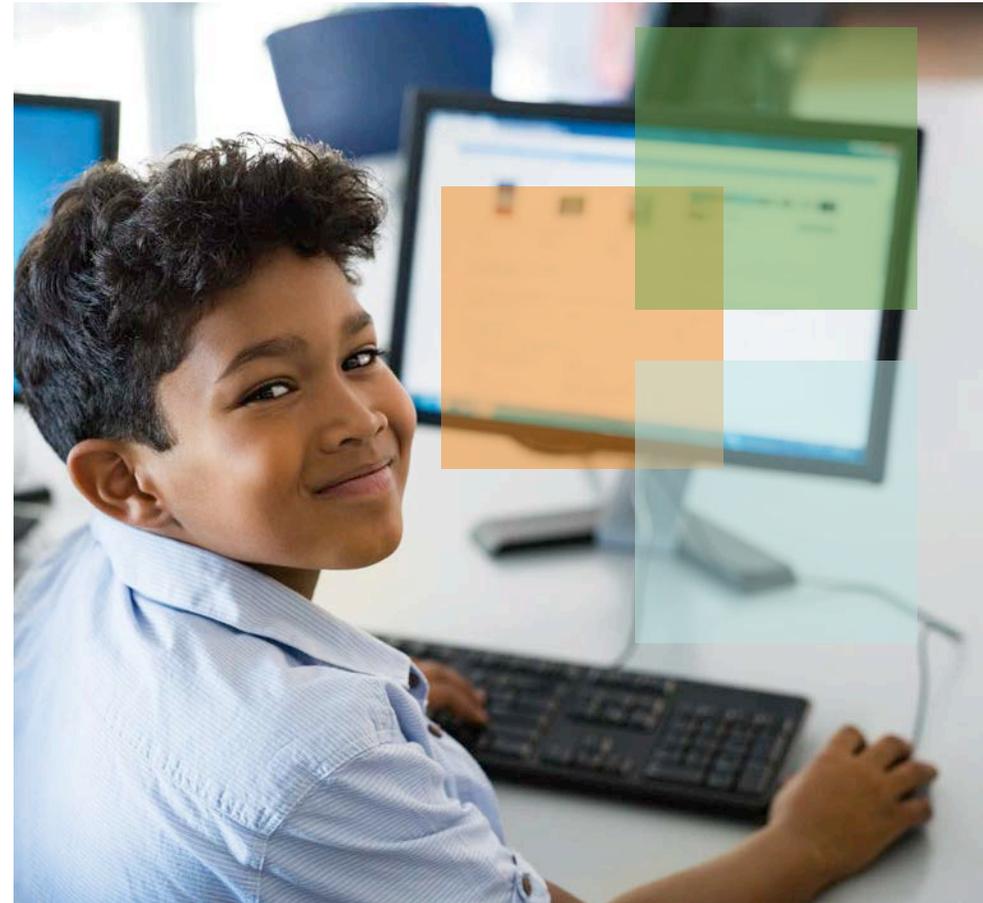
**Health and Wellness**

**Financial Literacy**



## Digital/Technology Inclusion

The digital and technology divide disproportionately affects our community across income and education levels as well as age and race. The Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated this divide, especially for students and the adults who care for them. In addition to ensuring all possible resources are used to maximize access to technology, promote technology education, and create informed technology users, The Indianapolis Public Library pledges to become an active community partner and advocate for this basic need. These efforts include continuing to provide quality science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) programming and resources.



### Digital/Technology Strategic Objectives

- Expand support for digital literacy and skills training by delivering at least 600 technology and computer training sessions annually across the system, providing additional technology training to staff, and deploying laptops to branches.
- Complete the Digital Inclusion Roadmap by the end of 2021 through outreach and engagement with community leaders and organizations regarding digital/technology inclusion and the digital divide.
- Create an up-to-date space for exploration of contemporary technology by redesigning The Learning Curve at Central Library.
- Continue to provide high-quality STEAM programs system-wide.

## Education

The Indianapolis Public Library continues to provide an array of programs and resources to promote lifelong learning of every kind. Education efforts will continue with a focus on these strategic objectives for everyone in the community by further enhancing our efforts to collaborate and connect with and support schools, other learning organizations, education partners, and all lifelong learners in Indianapolis.

### Education Strategic Objectives

- Promote resource sharing between schools and IndyPL through teacher and administrator outreach efforts, and enhance marketing and public relations efforts resulting in 2% annual growth in shared system circulation.
- Identify the needs and assets of educators (Pre-K-to-16 and adult education) by administering a survey by the end of 2021.
- Beginning in 2022, annually deliver at least 15 sessions of high-quality professional development for educators through engagement with various community partners.

## Reading and Writing

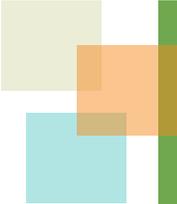
Recreational and educational reading and access to information is foundational to any library. The Indianapolis Public Library will strive to create innovative reading programs, inform more community members of the reading resources available, and serve as a connector for the literacy needs of everyone.

### Reading and Writing Strategic Objectives

- Increase community awareness and accessibility to achieve 20% of service area population as active cardholders by the end of 2023 by continuing to remove barriers, enhancing marketing and public relations efforts, and providing excellent customer service.
- Increase usage of cards created as a result of Library card campaigns to 25% annually through enhanced marketing.
- Increase community awareness and accessibility, remove barriers, enhance marketing and public relations efforts, and provide excellent customer service to drive total circulation (checkouts + renewals) to 10.5 million in 2023.

## Health and Wellness

Personal health and wellness are basic needs for all in the community. The Indianapolis Public Library will improve the sharing of important wellness information through innovative programs, resources, and collaboration with local health and wellness partners.

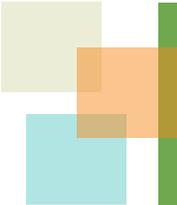


### Health and Wellness Strategic Objectives

- Expand the health and wellness offerings to at least 15 class sessions annually by making internally available classes available to the public.
- Expand the health and wellness collection by 25% by the end of 2023 through targeted collection management.
- Deliver one system-wide health and wellness event annually with a focus on the disproportionate impact of many health issues on Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, and all people of color.
- Connect with community health partners semi-annually to identify the best ways to partner and promote healthy living and resources.

## Financial Literacy

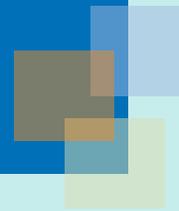
Basic financial literacy, such as an understanding of budgeting or ways to improve and maintain a good credit score, ensures individuals have the ability to make informed financial decisions, effectively manage household finances, and strive toward financial independence. The Indianapolis Public Library will collaborate with area partners and provide resources to the Indianapolis community and small businesses to promote financial literacy for all.



### Financial Literacy Strategic Objectives

- Expand online financial literacy and management classes to at least 15 class sessions annually.
- Expand immigrant and refugee financial literacy programming to at least 20 class sessions annually.
- Expand financial management collection by 25% by the end of 2023 through targeted collection management.

# Other Strategic Initiatives



## Partnerships with The Library Foundation

The Indianapolis Public Library Foundation partners with donors to enrich lives, foster lifelong learning and engage our diverse community through The Library, raising approximately \$2 million per year for reading programs, author lectures, concerts, performances, exhibits, technology classes, and more. The Foundation's strategic plan is available at [indyplfoundation.org](http://indyplfoundation.org).

### Digital Encyclopedia of Indianapolis

The endeavor to reinvent the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (1994) from a book to a digital platform to serve as a sustainable, dynamic, and reliable source of information about the metropolitan area is well underway, and by the end of 2021, ownership for this publication will transfer to The Indianapolis Public Library. The Encyclopedia is emblematic of the evolution of today's public libraries to a more digital presence. This work represents a collaborative framework among the city's major heritage and cultural institutions in partnership with The Polis Center at IUPUI, while addressing the Library's strategic priorities of increasing access to digital information, with a heightened awareness of racial equity and inclusion. The Foundation is committed to helping raise the startup funds for this initiative, having already raised \$1.6 of the \$2.2 million required for development and early sustainability. Early support was provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. and other generous donors.

### Racial Equity Training for IndyPL staff

One of the many challenges facing American institutions today is the need to reconcile histories that have resulted in the exclusion of Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, and other communities of color with intersectional identities. Public libraries share this history and must work to undo the systems that have influenced library service models and impeded our ability to provide equitable service to every member of our community. In partnership with The Indianapolis Public Library Foundation, we will prioritize sending every library staff member through racial equity training over the next three years. This training will allow for improved understanding of the history of race and racism in our country and offer opportunities for intentional learning about why racial equity is critical to every aspect of library service.

### Sustainability of the Center for Black Literature & Culture

The Library is well into the development of the Center for Black Literature & Culture (CBLC) located at Central Library thanks to the extensive support of our Library Foundation as the steward of the original \$1.36 million Lilly Endowment Inc. grant. Phase II, a multimedia component, will launch in October of 2021 with an additional \$500,000 in bond issue funding, approved by the Library Board of Trustees. The Library is committed to supporting The Foundation's fundraising efforts to sustain the CBLC's staff and program costs.



## Building Our Capacity

### West Perry Branch Library

Opening in the summer of 2021, the new West Perry Branch Library fills a major service area gap on Indy’s growing southside, home to Indy’s largest Burmese population. The 24,000-square-foot building was designed by Schmidt Associates and HBM Architects, with Powers & Sons Construction as the construction manager. It sits on five acres near the intersection of Harding Street and Southport Road with great views of the wooded area along Little Buck Creek. It will feature 75,000 item collection, engaging spaces for all ages, a 120-person-capacity community room, spacious study rooms, abundant natural lighting, plus an outdoor space for programming and casual patron use. The building will incorporate a rooftop solar array and be built to achieve LEED Silver Certification for energy and resource conservation.

## Glendale Branch Library

In August of 2020, IndyPL purchased 5.7 acres of property at the former John Strange Elementary School owned by the Metropolitan School District of Washington Township. This site, located at the northeast corner of 62nd Street and Olney Road, will make the Glendale Branch Library more accessible for patrons by getting the library into a standalone building. The presence of the 62nd Street multi-modal trail and a stoplight will help to ensure safe access for the neighborhood to the new building. The new facility, designed by krM Architecture, will be approximately 25,000 square feet, with construction managed by Powers & Sons Construction beginning in the fall of 2021 and project completion by the end of 2022. Quiet study rooms, a large community room, improved access to computers, a lively children's area, and an outdoor space for programming and casual patron use will be among the features of the new building. The building will incorporate a rooftop solar array and be built to achieve LEED Silver Certification for energy and resource conservation.

## Fort Ben Branch Library

In November 2020, The Library Board of Trustees approved the \$1.00 purchase of 2.5 acres from the Fort Harrison Reuse Authority for the construction of the new Fort Ben Branch Library. The location fills a service area gap on the far northeast side, between the existing Lawrence and Warren Branches. The 24,000-square-foot branch will be located at the northeast corner of 56th Street and Melner Road. Ratio Architects is the architect on the project, with the Skillman Corporation and Davis & Associates as the construction managers. The branch is expected to open in 2023.

***These IndyPL capital projects are funded from individual bonds approved by the Indianapolis City-County Council totaling over \$58 million that are assessed with no increase in the Library's current debt service tax rate.***



## Redesign of The Learning Curve at Central Library

The Learning Curve was designed in the early 2000's to provide a rich experience for young people who visit Central Library with their families or on school field trips. It has offered both literature and technology adventures, welcomed youth of all ages with hands-on experiences, and vetted numerous initiatives for eventual implementation across the library system. Nearly two decades later, The Learning Curve is due for major updates to reflect the priorities of this strategic plan and the evolving learning needs of children. Funds have been appropriated for planning and design during 2021-22, and construction will be funded by an additional bond issue in 2023.

***With the additions of the new locations and facility upgrades, the goal is to increase the adjusted door count figure to 4 million in 2023.***

# Summary of the Strategic Plan Process and Acknowledgements

Like many things in 2020, the pandemic required us to rethink the strategic plan process. The process originally sought in-person discussion sessions with both IndyPL staff and the Indianapolis community. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, adjustments were made to gather input virtually and with a series of surveys.

An IndyPL Strategic Plan Steering Committee was created to help synthesize and shape the information of the plan. This committee included a racially- and age-diverse cross-section of managers and staff from every area of the organization. The group met for two hours, every other week, for several months to guide this plan. Thank you to this entire group for your fearless input, detailed conversations, and the variety of viewpoints to ensure this plan can be put into action by Library staff.

Committee Chair Dr. Terri Jett, Dr. Khaula Murtadha, and Board President Judge Jose Salinas represented The Library Board's Committee on Strategic Planning, which provided invaluable guidance and perspective. Thank you to the members of this committee and to the entire Library Board of Trustees for your expertise, leadership, and support throughout the process.

The planning process included a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis; a series of staff surveys to help determine our mission statement, vision statement, and organizational values; a widely distributed community survey; and conversations with several community partners regarding the priorities identified in the community survey.

The community survey was one of the largest IndyPL community feedback efforts ever undertaken, and sought feedback from individuals who use the Library as well as those who do not. It was distributed in paper form in all branches (when facilities reopened after a several week pandemic-related closure), available on the IndyPL.org website, and pushed out via various IndyPL social media platforms. Additional distribution efforts were made with area schools and Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic community leaders to ensure the inclusion of diverse needs and perspectives. These collective efforts resulted in more than 4,600 survey responses used to identify and shape the strategic priorities in this plan.

IndyPL would like to especially thank the following community partners for providing feedback regarding our priority areas: KHEPRW, Edna Martin Christian Center, Immigrant Welcome Center, Hawthorne Center, Latino Youth Collective, La Plaza, and Flanner House.

Finally, a special thanks goes to Nate Weber who helped with much of the behind-the-scenes work of this project—his efforts were vital to moving the process along.

The Indianapolis Public Library 2021-2023 Strategic Plan is a culmination of all of these efforts and the hard work of so many. We are excited for the next three years and look forward to serving our community as effectively and equitably as possible.



- Garrett Mason, *Library Strategic Planning and Assessment Officer*

# Committees and Acknowledgements

## Library Board Strategic Planning Committee:

Dr. Terri Jett, *Committee Chair*; Dr. Khaula Murtadha, Judge Jose Salinas

## Staff Strategic Plan Steering Committee:

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## Approved by The Indianapolis Public Library Board of Trustees on February 22, 2021

Judge Jose Salinas, *President*

Curtis Bigbee, *Vice President*

Ray Biederman, *Secretary*

Dr. Terri Jett

Dr. Khaula Murtadha

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