

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2027





MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION

Evanston Public Library connects our diverse community through learning, discovery, and shared experiences, providing equitable access to resources, fostering personal growth, and creating inclusive spaces where everyone can belong, learn, and connect.





VISION

To ignite limitless possibilities, inspire bold ideas, and empower every person to build a connected, inclusive community.

CORE VALUES

- Inclusivity & Belonging: We are committed to creating spaces where all community members feel welcome, valued, and empowered to share their stories and experiences.
- **Lifelong Learning:** We nurture curiosity and promote continuous personal and professional development through diverse resources, programs, and innovative services.
- Equitable Access: We strive to remove barriers and provide fair and equitable access to knowledge, technology, and opportunities, ensuring that all community members can thrive.
- Community Wellbeing: We engage with the community to promote social connection, resilience, and mutual support, fostering a healthy, informed, and connected city.
- Sustainability: We are dedicated to responsible stewardship of our resources, promoting sustainable practices that protect our environment and contribute to a more resilient community.

EPL: BELONG, LEARN, CONNECT.

Background

The Evanston Public Library's (EPL) Strategic Plan 2025-2027 builds on the momentum of 2022-2024 community engagement efforts, including a 2024 staff survey and community listening sessions with the director that shaped the library's 2024 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Plan. These sessions highlighted the desire for a library that reflects Evanston's diverse population, provides equitable access to resources, and offers inclusive programming. Key themes included modernizing library spaces, embracing sustainability, and expanding services that foster connection, learning, and feeling like everyone belongs.

This strategic plan outlines EPL's commitment to evolving alongside the community, enhancing its spaces, diversifying its collections, expanding outreach, and ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment. Through this plan, EPL aims to remain a vital and responsive community hub.



Dear Evanston Community,

We are honored to share the Evanston Public Library Strategic Plan for 2025-2027, a vision born from your voices and shaped by our shared aspirations. This plan reflects our deep commitment to fostering a library where everyone belongs, learns, and connects.

At the heart of this journey is a belief that the library is more than a building and more than books—it is a living space where curiosity meets opportunity, diverse stories are shared, and new ideas flourish. Guided by our mission, vision, and values—Inclusivity & Belonging, Lifelong Learning, Equitable Access, Community Wellbeing, and Sustainability—we will build a future that reflects the dynamic spirit of Evanston.

With this plan, we embark on an ambitious path forward. Together, we will create inclusive spaces, empower access to information and resources, and promote lifelong learning for every stage of life. We will deepen our partnerships with the City, cultivate new collaborations, and ensure sustainable practices guide our operations and future growth.

We invite you to be part of this exciting future. Visit the library, explore our digital resources, take a class, or attend one of our many programs across the city. Share your ideas, engage with us, and support the library through giving. You matter here—and together, we will create a stronger, more connected Evanston for all.

Sincerely,



Yolande Wilburn, Executive Director



Tracy Fulce, President, Library Board of Trustees

STRATEGIC

Priorities







Year 1 (2025) Goals and Performance Indicators:

other key stakeholders.

- Develop a Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan:
 Initiate the development of a Facilities Master Plan to assess current and future space needs, including input from the City of Evanston and potential community partners. This plan will ensure that all spaces are optimized for inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability.
 - Indicator: Complete the Facilities Master Plan by Q4 2025, with recommendations aligned with the 2024 Facility Assessment and stakeholder input.
- City and Partner Space Assessment:
 Conduct an in-depth review of City and community partner
 space requirements to identify shared space opportunities for the
 renovation of the Main Library and potential relocation plans.
 - Indicator: Finalize the City and partner space assessments by Q3 2025, integrating the findings into the Facilities Master Plan.

Year 2 (2026) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Renovation or Relocation Execution: Based on the Facilities
 Master Plan, begin detailed planning for renovation or relocation
 projects, prioritizing shared spaces with the City of Evanston and
 community partners.
 - Indicator: Commence construction or relocation preparation by Q2 2026, with quarterly progress updates to the City and Library Board.

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Year 3 (2027) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Implement Facilities Improvements: Based on the master plan, begin implementing the recommended facility improvements, ensuring spaces are inclusive, accessible, and sustainable. Monitor progress toward sustainability goals through ongoing renovation or relocation projects.
 - Indicator: Achieve completion of facility improvements by Q4
 2027, as determined by the construction project timeline.





EMPOWERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE:

Position EPL as a leader in community engagement by providing equitable access to information, resources, and programming. Prioritize historically marginalized communities, fostering belonging and empowering all residents to connect, learn, and thrive.

Year 1 (2025) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Technology and Accessibility Improvements: Upgrade the library's website and mobile app to improve navigation, accessibility, and user experience, positioning EPL as a technology leader in the community.
 - **Indicator:** Complete website and app upgrades by Q1 2025, with a user satisfaction survey showing an 80% approval rate post-launch.
- Broaden Marketing and Outreach: Expand the library's marketing efforts to enhance public awareness of available resources and services, particularly those supporting DEIB initiatives.
 - **Indicator:** Develop a comprehensive marketing plan by Q1 2025, with a 25% increase in program participation from targeted demographics by Q4 2025.





EMPOWERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Year 2 (2026) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Introduction of Cutting-Edge Technology Programs: Develop workshops to introduce the community to emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), coding, and digital media creation.
 - **Indicator:** Launch at least five technology-focused community workshops by Q4 2026, positioning EPL as a hub for digital innovation.
- **Expand Community-Led Programming:** Establish a model for community members to design and lead library programs, fostering deeper engagement and promoting diverse voices in EPL's programming.
 - **Indicator:** Launch at least five community-led programs by Q3 2026, with participant feedback showing a 75% satisfaction rate, ensuring representation from historically marginalized communities.

Year 3 (2027) Goals and Performance Indicators:

Evaluate and Strengthen Outreach and
 Engagement Initiatives: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all outreach and engagement efforts over the past three years to assess their impact and ensure alignment with EPL's DEIB goals. Use findings to refine future engagement strategies and outreach efforts.

 Indicator: Complete the evaluation by Q2 2027 and implement updated strategies by Q4 2027 to increase community participation and satisfaction.





LIFELONG

learning for all



Promote continuous learning and intellectual curiosity by enhancing the library's role as a community hub for books, education, culture, and personal growth, fully integrating equity principles into all learning and access efforts.

Year 1 (2025) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Collection Diversity Audit: Conduct a comprehensive audit of the library's collection to identify gaps in representation and diversity, ensuring materials reflect the needs and interests of Evanston's diverse community.
 - **Indicator:** Complete audit by Q4 2025, with a written plan for resource allocation that addresses identified gaps and expands diverse materials, including books, digital resources, films, and other media.
- Inclusive Programming Enhancement: Create and evaluate diverse, culturally responsive programs each quarter that reflect the experiences of historically marginalized groups, using data to refine offerings and ensure sustained engagement.

Indicator: Introduce eight new programs by Q4 2025, establishing a quarterly review process to assess participation, impact, and inclusivity.

 DEIB Professional Training: Implement professional training for library staff focused on mutual respect, curating and promoting diverse collections, conducting inclusive programs, and serving patrons from diverse backgrounds.

 Indicator: Complete staff training sessions by Q4 2025, with follow-up surveys showing increased staff confidence in equity, inclusion, and trauma-informed principles.





Year 2 (2026) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Develop a Community Learning Needs Assessment:
 Conduct a needs assessment to better understand the evolving learning interests and needs of the community, including feedback from underrepresented groups. Use the findings to shape future programming and collections.
 - Indicator: Complete the learning needs assessment by Q2
 2026, with recommendations integrated into program planning by Q4 2026 to ensure alignment with community needs.

Year 3 (2027) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Evaluate and Adjust DEIB Efforts: Evaluate DEIB-focused initiatives and adjust future programming and collection efforts to align with ongoing community needs.
 - Indicator: Complete evaluation by Q2 2027, with recommendations integrated into future strategic planning.





OBJECTIVE:

Ensure EPL's resources—financial, operational, and human—are used efficiently and strategically to meet evolving community needs, balancing fiscal responsibility with service excellence.

Year 1 (2025) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Staff Resource Allocation: Review staffing models to ensure roles and schedules are aligned with service demands, optimizing resource distribution across locations.
 - **Indicator:** Complete staffing review by Q2 2025, with adjustments to meet service delivery goals.
- Staff Technology Upgrades and Software Implementation: Upgrade staff computers and implement new tools for data tracking, facilities management, and safety monitoring to support efficient operations and education.
 - Indicator: Complete technology upgrades and software rollouts by Q3 2025, with staff training completed by Q4 2025.
- Data-Driven Decision Making: Implement datadriven tools and frameworks to assess and improve service delivery and resource use continuously.
 - Indicator: Establish data tracking systems by Q4 2025, with quarterly reports guiding decisionmaking.







RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY

Year 2 (2026) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Service Desk Reconfiguration: Reorganize service desks to provide a more centralized and streamlined approach, enhancing support for patrons' needs in convenient locations.
 - Indicator: Complete reconfiguration by Q2 2026, based on the Master Facilities Plan and patron feedback demonstrating improved access to resources and enhanced service delivery.

Year 3 (2027) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Budget Alignment with Strategic Priorities:
 Align budgetary planning and resource allocation with the library's strategic priorities, including DEIB, sustainability, and community engagement goals.
 - Indicator: Finalize budget realignment by Q3 2026, ensuring financial resources support strategic initiatives.
- Ongoing Evaluation of Service Models: Conduct an annual review of service models to ensure continued alignment with community needs and strategic goals.
 - Indicator: Complete the first annual service model review by Q4 2027, identifying improvements for the next planning cycle.



OBJECTIVE

Strengthen partnerships, deepen community engagement, and expand donor relations to support an inclusive organizational culture aligned with EPL's DEIB and sustainability goals and prepare staff for leadership opportunities.

Year 1 (2025) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Revise Community Engagement Manager to Include Equity: Transition the Community Engagement Manager role to Equity and Engagement Manager to provide a dedicated liaison to the DEIB Committee and internal Equity Team, enhancing the library's commitment to equity and promoting an inclusive culture.
 - **Indicator:** Complete reclassification by Q1 2025, with the new role actively involved in strengthening staff training, development initiatives, and DEIB alignment.
- Create a Strategic Development and Advancement Plan: The Development Officer
 will develop a Strategic Development and Advancement Plan that aligns with EPL's mission and
 strategic goals, including DEIB and sustainability efforts.

• **Indicator:** Strategic Development and Advancement Plan completed by Q2 2025, with clear benchmarks for donor engagement and revenue growth.

Focus on Staff Training to Promote from Within:
Implement training and development programs across all divisions to build skills among current staff and foster opportunities for internal promotion and succession planning.

 Indicator: Launch training initiatives by Q4 2025, with measurable outcomes indicating increased staff readiness for advancement.



RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Year 2 (2026) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Expand Fundraising Activities: Based on the recommendations from the Strategic Development and Advancement Plan, launch new fundraising campaigns, including targeted donor events, sponsorship opportunities, and community engagement initiatives.
 - Indicator: Increase annual fundraising revenue by implementing the recommendations from the Strategic Development and Advancement Plan by Q4 2026, based on targeted goals outlined in the plan.
- Strengthen Corporate and Philanthropic
 Partnerships: Develop new corporate partnerships and expand existing relationships with philanthropic organizations to enhance donor engagement and community impact.
 - Indicator: Secure at least three new corporate or philanthropic partnerships by Q3 2026, with defined initiatives supporting EPL's mission and strategic goals.
- Expand Volunteer Engagement and Support
 Programs: Build a stronger volunteer program to increase
 community involvement, focusing on recruitment, training, and
 recognition efforts that align with EPL's strategic initiatives.
 - Indicator: Increase volunteer participation by 20% by Q4 2026, with new volunteer-led initiatives launched to support library services and outreach.





Year 3 (2027) Goals and Performance Indicators:

- Dedicated Funding for Sustainability Programs:
 The Development Officer will identify and secure a dedicated funding stream to support sustainability and environmental programs, ensuring these initiatives have ongoing financial support.
 - Indicator: Secure dedicated funding for sustainability programs by Q4 2027 to enhance and expand EPL's environmental and wellness-focused offerings.
- Expand Donor Engagement through Impact
 Reporting: Launch a comprehensive impact reporting
 system to communicate EPL's achievements and progress to
 donors and partners, strengthening relationships and inspiring
 continued support.
 - Indicator: Publish an annual impact report by Q4 2027, with metrics highlighting program outcomes, donor contributions, and community impact, resulting in increased donor retention.
- Establish a Succession Planning Framework:
 Develop a formal succession planning framework to prepare staff for leadership transitions and ensure organizational continuity in key roles.
 - Indicator: Complete the framework by Q3 2027, with at least two staff members identified and supported through targeted development plans for future leadership position.

PARTNERSHIPS PARTNERSHIPS





OBJECTIVE

Ensure EPL's commitment to environmental stewardship through sustainable building operations and community programming. Align partnerships and programming to promote environmental awareness, health, and wellness throughout the community.

YEAR 1 (2025) GOALS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Develop and Adopt a Sustainability Plan: Create a library-specific sustainability plan
 aligned with the City of Evanston's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), focusing on reducing
 EPL's carbon footprint, energy usage, and waste across facilities. Integrate sustainable practices—
 such as energy-efficient lighting, HVAC systems, and eco-friendly materials—into future renovation
 or relocation projects.
 - **Indicator:** Complete the Sustainability Plan by Q4 2025, with implementation milestones identified for the next two years.
- Launch Sustainability Awareness Programs: Implement workshops and community
 events focusing on environmental sustainability, including citizen science projects, conservation
 efforts, and environmental literacy initiatives for all ages.
 - Indicator: Launch at least four sustainability-themed programs by Q4 2025, with participant feedback showing increased environmental awareness.

YEAR 2 (2026) GOALS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

Sustainable Building Practices: Begin applying sustainable building practices in renovation
or relocation projects based on the Sustainability Plan. Conduct quarterly reviews to
ensure alignment with conservation targets.

• **Indicator:** Achieve 25% integration of sustainable building elements by Q4 2026, with progress reviewed quarterly.

Expand Environmental Programming Partnerships:
Strengthen collaborations with organizations such as the
Evanston Environmental Association, Parks and Recreation
Department, and State Parks to offer programs focused on
outdoor recreation, environmental health, and wellness,
particularly for marginalized communities.

 Indicator: Formalize at least three new partnership agreements by Q2 2026, with expanded programming offering increased access to parks and wellness activities.



YEAR 3 (2027) GOALS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Evaluate and Enhance Sustainability Efforts: Conduct a comprehensive review of sustainability facility and programming initiatives implemented over the past two years to assess their impact, identify areas for improvement, and set new goals for future efforts.
 - Indicator: Complete the evaluation by Q3 2027 with clear recommendations for the next strategic planning cycle.



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JOIN US: CREATE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EPL TOGETHER





Building Inclusive Spaces and Community

For over 150 years, the Evanston Public Library has been a cornerstone of our community, where people gather to learn, find support, and create a sense of belonging for all.

Whether you're accessing digital eBooks, joining online programs, attending storytime, browsing a book, or exploring our new Innovation Station, the Library offers something for everyone. Our commitment is to continue building inclusive spaces where all can belong, learn, and connect.

Your support plays a crucial role in sustaining this mission and ensuring that we can continue to provide these resources and spaces. By joining us in this effort, you help strengthen the Library's future and build a more connected community for all.

Make a gift today scan here or visit www.epl.org/donate







IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING:

The leadership team will oversee implementation, with quarterly progress reviews and necessary adjustments provided to the Library Board and its committees quarterly to ensure progress toward strategic goals.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

Engage regularly with community members and stakeholders to refine and evolve the plan in alignment with public needs and library values, using feedback to drive innovation and community responsiveness.







Implementation & Oversight

- Oversight and Monitoring: The leadership team will oversee implementation, with quarterly progress reviews and necessary adjustments, provided to the Library Board and its committees quarterly to ensure progress toward strategic goals.
- Continuous Improvement: Library staff will engage regularly with community members and stakeholders to refine and evolve the plan in alignment with public needs and library values, using feedback to drive innovation and community responsiveness. •

line Indicator Responsible Party	1 Completed Facilities Facilities Manager	Master Plan by Q4 and EPL	2025. Leadership	1 Finalize the City and EPL Leadership,	partner space City of Evanston,	assessments by and Community	Q3 2025, integrating Partners	the findings into the	Facilities Master	Plan.	2 Commence EPL Leadership	construction or and Staff	relocation	preparation by Q2	2026.	3 Achieve completion EPL Leadership	of facility	improvements by Q4	2027.
Related Objective Timeline	Design welcoming, inclusive, and Year 1	sustainable environments that reflect	community needs, promote belonging,	and enhance service delivery,	prioritizing partnership with the City of	Evanston and other key stakeholders.					Year 2					Year 3			
Action	Develop a Comprehensive De	Facilities Master Plan su	20	City and Partner Space an	Assessment pr	<u>a</u>					Renovation or Relocation	Execution				Implement Facilities	Improvements		
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Communications Responsible Engagement **Party** & Marketing **Equity and** Manager **EPL Staff** Manager **EPL Staff EPL Staff** marketing plan by Q1 and app upgrades by demographics by Q4 2027 and implement increase in program Complete website updated strategies participation from workshops by Q4 Launch at least 5 Launch at least 5 evaluation by Q2 2025 with a 25% comprehensive programs by Q3 community-led Indicator Complete the tech-focused community by Q4 2027. Develop a Q1 2025. targeted 2026. 2026. 2025. **Timeline** Year 2 Year 2 Year 3 Year 1 Year 1 engagement by providing equitable access belonging and empowering all residents to Position EPL as a leader in community marginalized communities, fostering programming. Prioritize historically Related Objective to information, resources, and connect, learn, and thrive. Technology and Accessibility Introduction of Cutting-Edge Outreach and Engagement **Evaluate and Strengthen Expand Community-Led Broaden Marketing and** Action Tech Programs Improvements Programming Initiatives Outreach **EMPOWERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



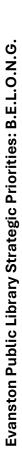


EPL Leadership Responsible Manager and DEIB Engagement Engagement Committee Party **Equity and Equity and** Manager **EPL Staff EPL Staff** 2025, with a written plan Complete evaluation by integrated into program Introduce at least eight Complete staff training for resource allocation. Complete the learning Complete audit by Q4 needs assessment by new programs by Q4 sessions by Q3 2025. recommendations planning by Q4. Q2 2026, with Indicator Q2 2027. 2025. Timeline Year 3 Year 1 Year 2 Year 1 Year 1 library's role as a community hub for books, education, culture, and personal growth, fully integrating equity principles into all intellectual curiosity by enhancing the Promote continuous learning and earning and access efforts. Related Objective Learning Needs Assessment **DEIB Professional Training Collection Diversity Audit Evaluate and Adjust DEIB** Inclusive Programming Develop a Community Enhancement Action Efforts **LFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL**





Responsible Party Information **Technology** Leadership Leadership **EPL Staff EPL Staff** Manager Finance Team EPL EPL rollouts by Q3 2025, with realignment by Q3 2026. staff training completed Establish data-tracking upgrades and software Complete renovations and reconfiguration by Complete by Q2 2025. Complete first annual Complete technology systems by Q4 2025. review by Q4 2027. Finalize budget by Q4 2025. Indicator Q2 2026. Timeline Year 2 Year 3 Year 3 Year 1 Year 1 Year 1 and strategically to meet evolving community operational, and human—are used efficiently needs, balancing fiscal responsibility with Ensure EPL's resources—financial, service excellence. Related Objective Staff Technology Upgrades Staff Resource Allocation **Budget Alignment with** Ongoing Evaluation of **Data-Driven Decision** Strategic Priorities Implementation Reconfiguration Service Models and Software Service Desk Action Making **OPTIMIZING RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY**





	Action	Related Objective	Timeline	Indicator	Responsible
					Party
	Revise Community Engagement Manager to Include Equity	Strengthen partnerships, deepen community engagement, and expand donor relations to support an inclusive organizational culture	Year 1	Complete reclassification by Q1 2025.	EPL Leadership
	Create a Strategic Development	aligned with EPL's DEIB and sustainability	Year 1	Strategic Development	EPL Leadership
Sd	and Advancement Plan	goals and prepare stall for teadersmp		and Advancement Plan	
IIH		opportunities.		completed by Q2 2025,	
Sł				with clear benchmarks	
1EE				for donor engagement	
1T;			,	and revenue growth.	
ЯАЧ	Focus on Staff Training to Promote from Within		Year 1	Launch training initiatives by Q4 2025.	EPL Leadership
1D	Expand Fundraising Activities		Year 2	Increase annual	Development
1A				fundraising revenue by	Manager
Sc				implementing the	
ШН				recommendations from	
121				the Development	
10				Strategic Plan by Q4	
Ш				2026.	
∀٦∷	Strengthen Corporate and		Year 2	Secure at least three new	Development
∃8	Philanthropic			corporate or	Manager
ອ	Partnerships			philanthropic	
ΝI				partnerships by Q3 2026.	
สบ	Expand Volunteer Engagement		Year 2	Increase volunteer	Development
ΙΤ۶	and Support			participation by 20% by	Manager
IN	Programs			Q4 2026.	
N	Dedicated Funding for		Year 3	Secure dedicated funding	Development
	Sustainability Programs			for sustainability	Manager
				programs by Q4 2027.	
	Expand Donor Engagement		Year 3	Publish an annual impact	Development
	through Impact Reporting			report by Q4 2027.	Manager
	Establish a Succession Planning Framework		Year 3	Complete the framework by O3 2027.	EPL Leadership
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Responsible Leadership Facilities **EPL** Staff Manager **EPL** staff **EPL Staff** Party integration of sustainable offering increased access Complete the evaluation expanded programming Complete Sustainability building elements by Q4 Formalize at least 3 new partnership agreements sustainability-themed programs by Q4 2025. to parks and wellness Achieve at least 25% Launch at least four by Q2 2026, with Plan by Q4 2025. by Q3 2027. activities. Indicator 2026. Timeline Year 3 Year 2 Year 2 Year 1 Year 1 partnerships and programming to promote health, and wellness throughout the sustainable building operations and environmental stewardship through community programming. Align Ensure EPL's commitment to environmental awareness, Related Objective community. Sustainable Building Practices **Environmental Programming Expand Partnerships for Evaluate and Enhance** Launch Sustainability **Awareness Programs** Sustainability Efforts Develop and Adopt a Sustainability Plan Action GROWING TOGETHER SUSTAINABILITY





Main Library

Monday -Thursday 10 am - 8 pm Friday & Saturday 9 am - 6 pm Sunday 12 pm - 6 pm

Phone: (847) 448-8600 Address: 1703 Orrington Ave.

Evanston IL 60201

Robert Crown Branch Library

Monday -Thursday 10 am – 8 pm Friday & Saturday 9 am – 6 pm Sunday 12 pm – 6 pm

Phone: (847) 448-8101 Address: 1801 Main Street, Evanston, IL 60202

www.epl.org

