

VIGO COUNTY  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

2024-2025

**GENERATING  
CHANGE.  
TRANSFORMING  
LIVES.**



VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC  
**Library**

GENERATING CHANGE. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

## BACKGROUND

In 2019, Vigo County Public Library launched a comprehensive Strategic Plan covering the years 2019-2023. The planning process featured a strategic planning committee assisted by an outside consultant, public surveys and listening sessions, staff surveys and listening sessions, collaboration with community partners also engaging in strategic planning, data analysis on library services, community demographics, and community data and trends.

After a productive first year, VCPL unexpectedly closed in March 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Library operations and services needed to be re-evaluated quickly so the library could re-open and provide essential services for customers. For all of 2020 and most of 2021, VCPL focused on redesigning library services within the confines of social distancing and implementing measures that made the library environment safe for staff and the public. As the pandemic continued, the library adapted to community needs and expectations for service during the pandemic.

Most pandemic restrictions had been lifted by 2022, and library staff evaluated discontinued programs and services alongside newly implemented initiatives in order to determine what the new normal would look like. Customers began to establish regular routines, and by 2023, VCPL was largely operating at a pre-pandemic level. Given the shift in priorities required to successfully navigate the pandemic, however, aspects of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan had been set aside.

VCPL Administration, including the Board of Trustees and the staff leadership team, determined that the main goals of the 2019-2023 plan are still relevant and actionable and proposed a 2-year extension to the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, allowing for already identified work to be completed on the current goals and objectives before embarking on a completely new strategic plan.

Public feedback was specifically sought for larger actions within this plan, for example, the addition of a 12 Points Library Branch, and continues to be considered in ongoing evaluation of programs and services. Staff have assisted in providing project recommendations for timelines, priority designation, budget implications, necessary partners, etc.

The work outlined in this extension will focus primarily on the next 15-18 months, at which point, VCPL will begin a new cycle of strategic planning, working with a consultant to conduct public surveying and listening sessions, research and evaluation, committee and staff engagement, etc., in anticipation of launching a fresh comprehensive strategic plan in 2026. While this may not be the most conventional way to proceed, the Board of Trustees and the staff leadership team feel confident it is an appropriate way to conclude outstanding projects and begin a new strategic planning process from a stronger position in the near future.

In this 2024-2025 extension of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, the Library demonstrates a strong commitment to the advancement of our community and outlines specific projects and actions necessary to achieve desired Library outcomes. A strong Board and collaborative community partnerships are essential, but VCPL work largely builds on the talents and potential of the Library staff, as they fulfill an integral role in the ability of our organization to:

- Generate Positive Change in the Community
- Empower Individuals, Families, and the Community to Succeed
- Create an Environment of Opportunity
- Maximize the Impact of Foundational Library Services and Operations

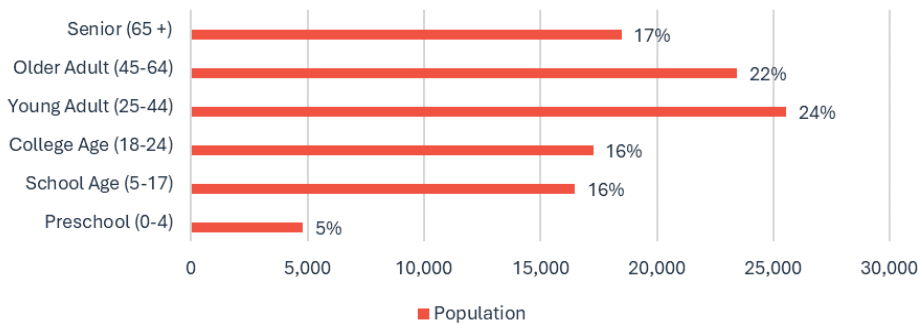
The Library is committed to serving the residents of Vigo County, and with the support of hard-working staff and community partners, we are confident we will succeed in *Generating Change* and *Transforming Lives*.

Terry Jones, Board President & Kristi Howe, Executive Director

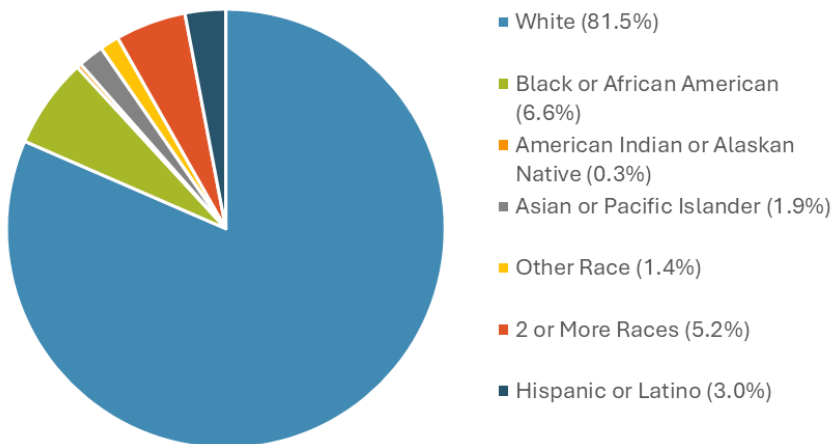
## VIGO COUNTY

Vigo County is located along I-70 in west-central Indiana, approximately 70 miles west of Indianapolis. Terre Haute is the county seat with a population of 58,000+, while population for the county totals approximately 106,000.

Vigo County Age Demographics



Racial Makeup of Vigo County



The median household income is \$51,125, with 18.3% of people living in poverty. Of those ages 25 or older, 90.3% have at least a high school diploma or higher and 27% have a bachelor degree or higher.

Approximately 55.4% of those 16 and older are active in the labor force.

Educational services, health care and social assistance jobs accounted for 26% of positions followed by retail (14%), manufacturing (13%), and hospitality and food services (9%).

While the community is not overly racially diverse, it is important to recognize and represent various types of diversity.

Vigo County Public Library maintains core values of inclusiveness, community, collaboration, innovation, and accountability. When modeling inclusiveness, it is essential that the Library snapshot is as diverse as the community snapshot. VCPL is a people-centered organization that supports a diverse and resilient workforce serving in positions with differing skillsets and educational requirements. The library staff represents seven decades and four generations, and staff members identify with different races, gender identities, sexual orientations, cultures, religions, socio-economic classes, and abilities/disabilities. Having a diverse workforce from varying backgrounds better positions the Library to maintain a broad understanding of community needs and allows for increased opportunities to meaningfully interact with library customers. All community members should feel welcome and find connection with the staff who are assisting them.

# STRATEGIC GOALS | 2019-2023 PLAN

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Vigo County Public Library generates positive change in the community by creating an environment of opportunity in which people can explore, expand their perspectives, and transform their own lives and the lives of future generations.



## GOAL ONE

### GENERATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY

Vigo County Public Library has a unique place in the community as a neutral public forum for individuals, families, and local organizations. By serving as a community convener, the Library can promote and demonstrate the power of collaboration and the positive impact that community-wide involvement can have on the lives of Vigo County residents.



## GOAL TWO

### EMPOWER SUCCESS IN INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND THE COMMUNITY

The 21st century presents challenges that require the constant development of new skills in order to create a successful workforce and to encourage economic growth and vitality. Vigo County Public Library seeks to cultivate a community with strong literary skills, critical thinking abilities, creativity, and an interest in learning that continues throughout all stages of life.



## GOAL THREE

### CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF OPPORTUNITY

Vigo County Public Library has a responsibility to ensure that all members of the community have easy access to Library services and resources. By taking advantage of new technologies, the Library will be able to reduce barriers that may be created for individuals and families based on the time or distance they may have to travel to the Main Library or West Branch Library.



## FOUNDATIONAL GOAL

### MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF FOUNDATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES AND OPERATIONS

Vigo County Public Library serves the public by providing services and resources that meet the current needs of the community. As those needs have changed, the Library has introduced new technologies, programs, and other services to adapt to new demands. While over 1,000 people visit our libraries each day, many Vigo County residents do not hold a Library card and may be unaware of the opportunities available to them. Likewise, they may have a need for services of which the Library is unaware. By exploring unmet needs, the Library will be able to better evaluate programs and services, increase access to and use of Library resources, and continue to define itself as a 21st century library.

Many library projects support more than one strategic planning goal. For example, the new 12 Points Library Branch includes work supporting each of the 4 strategic goals outlined in the plan. Instead of grouping work by goal and listing 12 Points under each of the strategic goals, the work outlined in this 2 year extension has been grouped by project or likeness, along with associated measurements.

### 12 POINTS LIBRARY BRANCH

Remaining Work includes: construction and infrastructure, outfitting new spaces, installation of required technology, hiring staff, developing branch specific procedures and operations.

Communication/Outreach: plans for grand opening, 12 Points awareness raising campaign, earning a role as a trusted neighbor, customizing programs and services.

Evaluate and Adapt: observe user patterns noting differences in requested programs/services vs. actual library usage, modify approach and services as appropriate.

Financial Obligations: execute remaining capital building expenses, as well as outfitting of spaces with furniture, fixtures, and equipment, use projected operations budget for hiring, programming, etc. Complete outstanding grant financial and narrative reports.



Measurements: By year-end 2024, provide a staffed and fully operational library branch open a minimum of 40 hours per week.

Develop meaningful data tracking on programs and services, including activities garage and laundry/hygiene program, to make informed budget recommendations in mid-2025 and provide baseline for future planning in next strategic plan.

Provide services, programs, and outreach of sufficient need and interest to support goal of 25,000 visitors in 2025.

## GROW VCPL MEMBERSHIP

Increase membership/cardholder participation: cultivate new members, strengthen relationship with current members, evaluate reasons for lapsed memberships.

Identify non-cardholder groups/sub-groups for customized outreach and marketing. Develop strategies for relationship building.

Develop library advocate network to better utilize word of mouth marketing to raise awareness of Library programs and services.

Create opportunities for existing members to become supporters, for supporters to become advocates, etc.

Conduct strategic marketing campaigns: including broad county-wide initiatives and specific targeted objectives.

Consider opportunities for cross-promotion and community partner engagement in membership campaign.



Measurements: Increase library card memberships to 35,000 by year-end 2025.

Continue to monitor return with various marketing channels for library programming and services, utilize data to drive targeted marketing campaigns to the specific channel audiences.

Implement county-wide initiative for library card drive for 2024. Continue county-wide campaign in 2025, and add targeted library card drive campaigns.

Develop a range of library promotional items or merchandise that can be distributed or sold to library supporters to advocate for and advertise library services by year-end 2025.

Evaluate (2024) and integrate (2025) community partners, local celebrities, neighbors, etc. in large scale campaigns like National Library Week, Library Card Sign-Up Month, etc.

### COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

While the 12 Points Library Branch goes a long way in reducing barriers to access for many VCPL customers, additional work remains in considering hours of operations, geographic locations of library services, and what types of services are needed where/when.

All VCPL facilities are due for Accessibility Audits, not just to ensure ADA compliance, but to consider user-friendliness and accessibility for diverse members of the disability community.

Barriers to access can include organizational culture and how welcome people feel in the Library environment. DEIA audits and training will continue in 2024-2025.



Measurements: Resume work undertaken in 2021 to report on library services, complete research and make recommendations to VCPL Board regarding future service locations, hours, alternative service models, etc.

Complete accessibility audit for universal access in 2024. Solicit feedback from members of disability community and identify recommendations for implementation. Update signage throughout facilities to ensure at minimum, English and Braille representation by year end 2025.

Implement a DEIA internal training program for each year, with one specifically focusing on disability awareness and understanding.

Conduct DEIA policy audit by year end 2024 and formulate plan to complete DEIA-related policy updates by year end 2025.



## OPERATIONS & PROCEDURES

Staff Training and Development: continued DEIA training, cross-training, baseline knowledge training for all staff, department procedures, etc.

Systematic Evaluation of Programs and Services: examining purpose, goal, target audience, financial commitment, successful outcomes, unique needs, etc. to determine appropriate programming and service offerings for demonstrated community needs.

Responsible Use and Management of Resources: strong budgetary practices already in place, need to expand use of existing resources to maximize investment and more routinely inventory and document existing assets.

Policies and Procedures: Board policies are reviewed regularly, but a comprehensive review of the entire policy manual is due. Department procedure updates are underway, but given substantial changes to workflows and workforce, completion of these updates is a priority.



Measurements: By year-end 2024, implement a baseline knowledge training program for all staff that includes basic tasks, policies, and procedures ALL employees should know and successfully execute, as well as which tasks need to be referred to another department/expert.

Evaluate current programming offerings for relevancy, cost, impact, etc. Include community survey/feedback, and sunset programs not aligned with mission or successfully meeting outcomes.

Establish a small asset inventory for tools over \$50 and other equipment costing \$150 or more by year-end 2024. Expand to include technology equipment by year-end 2025.

Investigate and implement at least two more features of Microsoft 365 to help streamline internal workflows by the end of 2025.

Develop and initiate a process for updating internal procedures for each department by year-end 2024. Complete updates and develop a timeline for future periodic review by the end of 2025.

Develop a timeline for comprehensive review of Board policies by year-end 2024 and recommend for Board action in 2025.



### MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Evaluate existing partnerships for strength of relationship, alignment of mission, connection to community, etc. to ensure time spent in collaboration is meaningful and intentional.

Recognize that VCPL cannot be all things to all people and some partnerships merit greater investment than others. Classify evaluated partnerships into appropriate levels of staff and resource commitment.

Develop new partnerships by seeking out new or existing organizations providing services that connect to Library goals or who serve communities that would benefit from Library services.

Utilize partnerships and partner expertise to identify underserved communities and develop strategies for reaching those communities.



Measurements: Re-ignite relationships with local level 1 and 2 daycares to provide high-quality storytimes and early childhood development resources by mid-2025.

Work with Vigo County School Corporation to advance elementary school literacy initiatives in a more comprehensive fashion for the 2025-26 school year.

Explore opportunities to provide student access to Overdrive's SORA program through public, private, and charter schools for all enrolled students with implementation target of 2025-2026 school year.

Develop productive relationships with community partners and government agencies to facilitate social service delivery and consider opportunities for on-site services at Library locations by year-end 2025.

Establish a bi-annual social services/resource fair connecting Library customers with service providers by year-end 2024.

In 2024, continue to prioritize DEIA partnerships that align with Library value of inclusiveness. Initiate partnerships in the disability community to develop specific services and outreach to meet community needs - target for implementation in 2025.

## INFRASTRUCTURE | TECHNOLOGY & FACILITIES

In addition to the areas of focus outlined in this document, the Library remains committed to ongoing technology and facilities maintenance. These obligations are prioritized each year in the budget development process. Plans for some of these projects are outlined below.

### TECHNOLOGY

Utilize available USAC e-Rate Funding (Category 1) as approved for 2024 with 80% e-Rate, 20% VCPL cost-share. 2024 projects include firewall update to protect against cyber attacks and expansion of broadband capacity to address network growth and congestion - Main Library from 1 Gbps to 7 Gbps; West Branch Library to 1 Gbps; 12 Points Branch Library to 1 Gbps. Finalize requests for approval for 2025 projects and submit for review.

Utilize available USAC e-Rate Funding (Category 2) as approved for 2024 with 80% e-Rate, 20% VCPL cost-share. 2024 projects include updating 18 uninterrupted power supplies in support of network connectivity and stability at all three Library locations during power outages. Finalize requests for approval for 2025 projects and submit for review.

Conduct system-wide mandatory staff cyber-security training and assessment, alongside ongoing use of simulated phishing emails.

Update staff and public computers per replacement schedules used in budget development. 2024 budget includes \$35,000+ for equipment updates. Replacement schedule will be used in 2025 budget development.

## FACILITIES

Main Library - HVAC updates are strategically spread across multiple budget years. 2024 updates include a new chiller pump, which should more efficiently service the building in maintaining a comfortable environment for staff and the public. Also scheduled for 2024 is an update to the air handler filter cage to utilize more affordable and longer-lasting filters.

Main Library - Elevator updates are scheduled to be completed by year-end 2025 to offer new elevator doors and cab, ensuring continued safe operation of the lift.

West Branch Library - 2025 marks 10 years in the remodeled facility, which includes a combination of HVAC equipment predating the renovation and purchased new in 2015. 2025 plans include a system analysis for equipment lifespan and energy efficiency. Upon completion of any HVAC modifications or repairs, cosmetic repairs to ceiling drywall will occur.

Main Library Grounds - Updates for 2024 include: modifications to enclose the Wiley Cupola for improved preservation and safety measures, as well as exterior lighting updates in specific areas to provide better illumination for customer safety and security. Necessary updates and/or replacement of the Poplar Street ramp are projected for completion in 2025.

West Library Grounds - Updates to the exterior shelter are under discussion and will be included in budget development for 2025.

## CORE VALUES

### ***Inclusiveness***

We respect individual perspectives and diverse backgrounds, making cultural and intellectual resources available to all.

### ***Community***

We are committed to and invested in the betterment of the community.

### ***Collaboration***

We work in concert with strategic partners to help the community flourish.

### ***Innovation***

We invigorate the community and stimulate a creative economy through inventive ideas and services.

### ***Accountability***

We manage resources responsibly to maintain the public's trust.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**President, Terry Jones**  
*Vigo County Commissioners*

**Brian Cain**  
*Vigo County Council*

**Vice-President, Jamie Young**  
*Vigo County School Board*

**George Heubel**  
*Vigo County Commissioners*

**Secretary, Christi Fenton**  
*Vigo County School Board*

**Tiffany Cherry**  
*Vigo County Council*

**Stacy Killion**  
*Vigo County School Board*

## LIBRARY MANAGEMENT TEAM

### ***Senior Leadership***

Kristi Howe, Executive Director

Rob Fox, Director of Human Resources

Heather Rayl, Director of Technology and Special Services

Dennis Shepard, Director of Support Services

### ***Department Managers***

Shaleena Barker

Chelsea Howard

Jeannette Bouchie

Curt Huffman

Brandy Bridgewater

David Kite

Angeline Carson

Hope Rice

Jeff Crews

Lola Snyder

Lauren Elyea

Anthony Suggs

Luke Gentry



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