



Five-Year Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Mission Statement: To provide information, education, recreation and inspiration.

Objectives of the Library: It is the aim of Riverside Regional Library to motivate persons of all ages to use the available materials and facilities, and to point out reliable, authoritative material; and to draw attention to the new, the critical, and even the unorthodox. Riverside Regional Library intends to be an active, dynamic force for enlightenment and enrichment of the lives of the citizens within its sphere of service.

Envisioned Future: The future that the Library sees for itself and for the community can be summarized in the following two statements. The first of these envisioned futures is captured in the phrase of **Shared Commitment**. It speaks to a covenant between the Library and the community. The Library pledges to be an exceptionally good steward of the funds entrusted to it and to deliver high value for every dollar invested in library services. The community in turn endeavors to support the Library by funding it (through both tax and charitable sources) at a level that will ensure the Library's ability to be effective. The second envisioned future centers on **being proactive in future Community Engagement**. The library strives to remain relevant to new generations of users; but more than that, it wants to be a changing, vibrant, transformative force that has a positive impact on the quality of people's lives. The envisioned futures are summarized below:

Shared Commitment

Rationale: A dynamic Library provides high-quality library and information services that enhance quality of community life and provide individuals with opportunities for personal and professional development. However, offering high-quality library and information services costs money. There are costs associated with purchasing and licensing resources and online content, with operating and maintaining a library facility and an online presence and with managing and staffing the Library enough hours to make it a dependable and convenient resource for the public. The Riverside Regional Library needs to develop and maintain multiple streams of funding (both tax-based and philanthropic/charitable-giving based) to ensure that it can acquire relevant resources, offer qualified staff assistance and operate without significant fluctuations or interruptions.

Goal: Increase the general revenue received by Riverside Regional Library. Improve community services and relations through funding improvements, other than operating expenses, to provide critical resources.

Activity I: Each year, increase donations.

- Requests for public donations at each library branch.
- Request donations for specific projects from local businesses.
- Have an entry on website about Library giving and look into providing a donation portal (i.e. PayPal) along with this entry on our website.
- Encourage donations of materials and time by local community members.

Activity II: Each year, increase grants received by the Library.

- Apply for more grants from the State Library.
- Apply for grants from Foundations.

Activity III: Identify needs that exceed financial resources and seek matching tax rate.

- Coordinate with governing bodies and other community stakeholders to define library needs.
- Coordinate with governing bodies and other community stakeholders to determine matching tax rate.

Activity IV: Develop a fundraising committee consisting of Board members representing all three counties, Branch Managers representing all three counties and the Director.

- Maintain membership and active participation in Leave a Legacy of the Heartland organization to encourage patrons to will money to the library.
- Support the FRIENDS of the Library in creating an endowment for future needs of the library by marketing the FRIENDS activities and providing administrative support.
- Develop a communications plan that will keep major stakeholders (Library Board of Trustees, FRIENDS of the Library, the Mayors and City Councils, City Administrations,

and major donors) involved with the library as an essential service of the cities/counties. Review and update by January 2025.

- Develop a plan for unique ways to raise non-tax revenue and strategic partnerships to provide adequate print and electronic collections.
- Research funding sources that provide funds for construction or purchase of library buildings and library interiors.

Community Engagement - Stimulate the Imagination

Rational: Many people in the community are unaware of the nature and scope of the services provided by the Library. Making sure that the public is aware of services that are offered that are relevant to them will maximize use of resources and will therefore increase the public's return on investment of every tax dollar allocated for library purposes. Public libraries also enjoy considerable support from individuals who do not regularly use them but who recognize the contribution that libraries make to the overall quality of community life. Ensuring ongoing support from all in the community is essential to the long-term health of the Library.

Goal 1: Increase awareness and accessibility of services and resources by having 50% of eligible county residents in our service areas as library card holders.

Activity: Reach the 55% goal by December 31, 2028.

- Determine current percentage of library card holders.
- Increase public awareness of RRL and the services it provides by employing technology and social media as well as more traditional methods to communicate with targeted audiences.
 - Website
 - Social Media - Facebook
 - Radio and Television
 - Newspaper
 - Newsletter
- Increase activities to include Library Card Sign-Up every year and when possible, during the sign-up for school and Teacher Day. Contact all schools to encourage sign up.
- Provide displays, exhibits, and digital access to local, State and Federal informational topics annually. Count attendees if possible and note in the annual report the number of different displays or exhibits.

Goal 2: Provide resources, programs and services that stimulate the imagination, satisfy curiosity and contribute to quality of life and personal and professional success for people of all ages.

Activity I: Develop a plan for all library locations to offer creative programming in conjunction with other educational partners at a variety of age levels that will be interesting and will promote the importance of reading and learning to the community. This plan will allow for new opportunities and partnerships.

- Research different types of program for each age group.
- Research different funding sources for such programming.
- Designate staff members to plan and conduct programs for different age groups.
- Programs will be evaluated by a survey at the end of each program and will include the number of attendees, the reaction of the attendees to the format and subject of the program, and whether the attendee utilized other library resources. Surveys will be reviewed annually.

Activity II: Develop facility plans to assess ADA code compliance and expansion of facilities to encourage use by the public by October 2024

- Determine ADA standards compliance:
 - Jackson Main Library
 - Altenburg Branch
 - Benton Branch
 - Oran Branch
 - Scott City Branch
- Increase the amenities.
- Enhance the comfort and “brows ability” of all areas to encourage people of all ages to spend more time at all facilities.
- By June 30, 2024, have funds in place to pursue a larger library facility in Scott City.

Activity III: Staff will review trends continuously as new technology is introduced and will provide recommendations quarterly for updates throughout the library system that reflect the needs and wants of the patrons.

- Look into performing community surveys in Benton, Jackson and Perryville.
- Study in detail the latest Community Survey for types of programs patrons and non-users are wanting.
- Update Technology Plan to reflect new technologies, including RFID, Self-Checkout Stations at the Jackson Main Library by June 2024.
- Train annually through webinars, conferences and workshops to update their readers’ advisory skills and knowledge.
- Provide the materials collection in a variety of formats to assist our community in exploring a variety of ideas.
- Determine which databases are being used most often by the public (ongoing).

Rationale: The public library serves as “the people’s university” where individuals, regardless of their economic status, can pursue lifelong learning without any direct cost. The library is a place of discovery where individuals can explore their personal interests, improve their employment skills, satisfy their curiosity and gather useful information on a wide variety of topics ranging from home improvement to investments and from formal education to entertainment. The role of the public library as a provider of no-cost/low-cost quality entertainment resources has grown in recent years as individuals and families facing economic pressures have sought out affordable, alternative leisure time activities.

Goal I: Provide a “people’s university” where individuals can satisfy their need for information, self-improvement, career development and provide quality entertainment.

Activity: Increase awareness and comfort level of library online digital resources.

- Develop brochures that promote online digital resources targeting different user groups.
- Introduce online tutorials that make it easier for staff to teach patrons their use and to increase digital resource utilization.
- Maintain being a dependable source of access to the online world (public computers and Wi-Fi access) and as an essential portal to digital content.
- Work to maintain a balance between popular offerings and substantive resources/collections.

Goal II: Provide knowledgeable readers’ advisory.

Activity I: Staff will train annually through webinars, conferences and workshops to update their readers’ advisory skills and knowledge.

Activity II: The library’s Technology Plan will be updated to reflect new technologies, including RFID, Self-Checkout stations at the Jackson Main Library by June 2024.

Goal III: Expand customer base of users of traditional library materials.

Activity I: Increase the amenities offered to the public to encourage individuals to visit more frequently.

Activity II: Enhance the comfort and design of all areas to encourage people of all ages to spend more time at all facilities.

Activity III: Improve the “browsability” of library collections.

Activity IV: Work to achieve and maintain a balance between popular offerings and substantive resources/collections.

Rationale: Access to the Internet has become a necessity in a digital world with a global economy. A connection to the online world has become essential to apply for many jobs, to file many governmental forms and to pursue an education in many fields. Public libraries provide the primary access to the Internet for a significant number of people. Furthermore, as more individuals begin to acquire a larger and larger percentage of their information in digital formats, the library will play an increasingly important role as an aggregator of demand and as a supplier of high-quality digital content through licensing agreements with publishers and with suppliers of costly information databases. By providing connections to the online world and by offering access to quality fee-based digital resources at no direct cost to the end user, the Riverside Regional Library can provide valuable services to a growing segment of the population that may visit the Library’s online presence as much or more than they visit the Library’s facility. By offering access to quality content all day, every day, the Library can position itself as a valuable resource that directly contributes to the quality of the personal and professional lives of a growing segment of the community.

Goal I: People of all ages will consider the Library to be a dependable source of access to the online world (public computers and Wi-Fi access) and as an essential portal to digital content.

Activity I: A use statistics survey of internal and external electronic databases will be completed on an annual basis to determine which databases are being used most often by the public (ongoing).

Activity II: Engage young professionals, “digital natives” and the general public and increase awareness of digital content offerings and services.

Activity III: Increase the comfort-level of users of traditional library materials in using digital resources.

Activity IV: Enhance the “electronic user friendliness” of the Library facility.

Activity V: Expand digital content offerings.

Activity VI: Enhance web presence and content available through the Library’s web site.

Activity VII: Adopt best practices in the development of digital applications and services developed by other libraries.

Activity VIII: Expand opportunities for training and exposure to new technologies for Library staff.

Goal II: Make the people of our communities more aware of the Library’s digital content, so they value these services and they consider it an essential community asset.

Activity I: Increase public awareness of digital resources through focused efforts to reach targeted audiences.

Activity II: Communicate the value of the Library’s digital resources to people who don’t regularly use the Library by employing technology, social media, traditional media as well as word of mouth.

Activity III: Enhance efforts designed to communicate the availability of existing services that may be relevant to people who don’t regularly use the Library.

Activity IV: Extend staff capacity through the use of student internships and developing opportunities for student projects that further the Library’s public awareness efforts.

Activity V: Employ nontraditional as well as more traditional methods to communicate with targeted audiences.

Activity VI: Develop strategic partnerships and engage community resources to enhance public awareness efforts.