



MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan

➤ Community and Connection

The Milwaukee Public Library connects people and communities.

➤ Twenty-first Century Literacy

The Milwaukee Public Library helps people learn, grow, and thrive.

➤ Efficiency and Excellence

The Milwaukee Public Library is a dynamic, changing organization.

Mayor Tom Barrett's Key Objectives

Mayor Tom Barrett has identified five key objectives, with special emphasis on reducing crime, improving educational outcomes, and creating jobs. The Milwaukee Public Library supports these objectives through a number of initiatives. They are incorporated into this plan and will be key to the implementation of the action steps.

The objectives are:

- Economic development and job creation
- Education
- Resident safety
- Strengthening neighborhoods
- City services are customer services

The Context: The Need and the Challenges

The Milwaukee Public Library is at a critical juncture in its history. The social and cultural forces at work in Milwaukee, the country, and the world mandate new approaches to meet the needs of the modern community in which access to digital information and technology is pervasive and almost requisite for daily life, but is also still beyond the reach of many.

The Milwaukee Public Library has had a historically significant role in the cultural and educational evolution of the city of Milwaukee, a city that was built as much on will as on wealth. Current economic trends place financial constraints on public services and programs, and the Library faces the challenge of adapting its historic role to today's environment of tight funding, the disparity in the city in access to tools and skills required for competence in daily life, and the need for connection and sense of community.

The Value of the Library

The Library is poised to take on this challenge. As a long-time trusted agent in the community, the Library provides services and programs that reach thousands of Milwaukeeans every day. The Library provides public access to information and to cultural and education resources that is unparalleled in the city and region.

The Milwaukee Public Library has great strengths: its staff, its collections and resources, and its name and image. The Library will use its historic strengths to pursue three strategic directions that address the challenges of today, that will allow the city and the Library to thrive, and that ensure the Library is a strong and flexible public service organization.

A key to addressing the challenges of today is the identity and image of the Library in the community, the awareness of the role of the Library in Twenty-first Century society.

Direction

To reinforce its role in the educational and cultural development of the community, the Library will develop new programs and services to meet new social and economic requirements of the people of the city of Milwaukee, especially the needs for job skills, economic self-sufficiency, and literacy of all kinds – the tools and skills required to be functional, useful participants in society.

To broaden its reach in the community, the Library will re-invigorate its facilities, increase its marketing, reaching out to and attracting new populations of users, and developing trust in and familiarity with Library programs and services among those in the community who don't use the Library, or don't use it to full advantage.

These are the Strategic Directions that the Milwaukee Public Library will pursue during the next three to five years.

I. Community and Connection

Strategic Direction: Milwaukee Public Library will be the Community Connection for the City of Milwaukee, the link between people and information.

Central Library. The Central Library will serve as a reference and referral resource for both the City of Milwaukee and the region. It will be a destination for those interested in its special collections as well as a gathering place for the community.

Neighborhood Libraries. The Neighborhood Libraries will closely reflect the needs, cultures, and values of the neighborhoods, and will reallocate resources to serve as places for people to gather, to learn, to obtain and exchange information, and to communicate. Each Neighborhood Library will be a welcoming presence in each neighborhood, and a trusted agent.

Virtual Library. MPL will use its Web space to provide an online and virtual community that fosters and promotes discussion and exchange of information and ideas, and that allows users to create and share digital information. MPL will develop its Web site as an interactive location and destination, as much a part of the Library as its physical facilities.

II. Twenty-first Century Literacy

Strategic Direction: Milwaukee Public Library will foster literacy – including technology literacy – as key to the educational and economic progress of the city.

Literacy. MPL will advocate and help develop literacy of all kinds for all residents of the city, with a special emphasis on reading literacy for both adults and children, to help increase the city's rate of adult literacy. MPL will play a key role in lifelong learning, particularly for young adults and seniors.

Technology. MPL will make the Central Library the predominant high-technology public information resource in the region, providing more access to electronic resources, implementing and adapting current technologies, seeking high-technology partnerships, and creating a technology demonstration and utilization space.

Employment. MPL will continue and expand services that provide assistance to city residents in developing job-seeking skills and in finding and applying for available jobs in the city. MPL staff will be proactive in providing this assistance, and will be trained to use the existing and evolving tools available to job-seekers.

III. Efficiency and Excellence

Strategic Direction: Milwaukee Public Library will capitalize on staff, collections, and partnerships to develop a more effective and efficient organization.

Staff. MPL will assess and evaluate all staff positions and jobs at the Central Library and the Neighborhood Libraries to determine needs for staff development based on a new organization model, new operating environment, and new and evolving programs and services. MPL will provide staff development opportunities for new and enhanced skills and tools needed as MPL transforms its operating and service models.

Friends/Foundation. MPL will grow the existing cooperative partnership relationships with the Milwaukee Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Milwaukee Public Library.

Partnerships. MPL will assess and evaluate all existing partnerships and cooperative arrangements and prioritize them, developing specific criteria for entering into such relationships with emphasis on those related to education, economic development and employment skills. MPL will investigate more private/public and non-traditional partnerships, and seek partnerships in the business community, especially those based on technology exchange or implementation as well as making strategic choices concerning supporting social services partners, including other City agencies.

Collections. MPL will assess and build on its collection strengths to ensure that it remains an in-demand regional and statewide resource for materials.

Operations. MPL will develop and implement a new organization model and new operational processes and methods to create higher levels of organizational and staff efficiency.

Library Cooperation. MPL will work with other public libraries in the region and state to investigate cooperative activities and create efficiencies.

- **328,071 - Library Card Holders (good for many seasons)**
45,700 – Season ticket holders for the Bucks, Brewers, and Milwaukee Rep combined.
- **2,590,588 - Library visitors**
150 – Number of times it would take to fill the Bradley Center with MPL visitors.
- **3,030,281 - Materials in collection**
200,000 – Size of collection at a “super” book store.
- **3,030,281 Items - The largest public library in the state**
789,129 – Size of the next largest Wisconsin Public Library.
- **2,944,880 - Items Circulated**
\$47,560,665 – The cost to purchase these materials by individuals.
- **470,079 - Hours of Free Computer Use**
\$1,733,684 – Cost of this same time at an Internet cafe.
- **4,404 - Attendance at Free Computer Classes**
\$ 220,200 – Estimated dollar value of classes.
- **67,516 - Attendance at Children’s Programs**
Would almost fill Miller Park twice.
- **6 ¼ Years - The time needed to listen to the music available on CD at MPL.**
2,376 hours – The total hours of entertainment at Summerfest if all stages were open 24 hours/day.

'Value of Library' Annual Visitors to Milwaukee Attractions

Visitors by Event or Location	Attendance	year & source
Milwaukee Public Library	2,590,588	2005 MPL Statistics report
Milwaukee Brewers	2,211,023	2005 ESPN.com
Milwaukee County Zoo	1,307,492	2005 call to Zoo
Milwaukee Public Museum	671,014	2004 Business Journal
Milwaukee Art Museum	322,620	2005 call to Museum
Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory	170,500	2004 Business Journal
Betty Brinn Children's Museum	156,869	2005 call to Museum

