# Marion County Public Library System
## Operational Plan of Service
## 2025-2030

## VISION

*The Marion County Public Library System serves as a center of community engagement where citizens are informed, inspired and empowered.*

## MISSION

*The mission of the Marion County Public Library System is to connect citizens with information, ideas and experiences to strengthen and enrich our community and quality of life.*

## GUIDING STATEMENT

*We recognize the essential role of reading for success in life and work, the importance of equal access to lifelong learning and the value of personal development and engagement to strengthen our community.*

## COMMITMENTS

- Services accessible to all.
- Collections of value and interest which are current and relevant.
- Outstanding reference, readers advisory and patron services.
- An engaged, skilled and well-trained team collaborating to deliver responsive, quality service and demonstrating the Marion County values of humbleness, integrity, commitment, accountability, respect and discipline.
- Technology to extend, expand and enhance services.
- Facilities that are safe and inviting, providing convenient locations and hours.
- Stewardship of the public trust with efficient use of people and resources.
- Public/private partnerships which are collaborative and cooperative, to enhance services.

# Goal 1: Read

*Citizens will find materials for information, enjoyment and learning in a variety of formats through the public library.*

**Initiatives**

A. Acquire, maintain and present a well-rounded collection, in various formats, that reflects the interests of the community.

B. Enhance the patrons' enjoyment and ease of using library materials through assistance from knowledgeable, helpful and engaged staff, with a patron-friendly catalog, without the barrier of overdue fines.

**Objectives**

**1.1 Collection Development, Marketing, Management**

Allocate adequate resources to assist citizens in fulfilling their informational, recreational and educational needs, leading to a 2% yearly growth in the circulation of library materials.

**1.1 Activities**

1. Gradually restore funding for both physical and electronic formats, to reach $1 million annually *(Administration)*.

2. Evaluate and acquire emerging formats to meet patron demand and interest *(Information Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services)*.

3. Revise the collection development policy and management plan to align with shifts in publishing trends and user preferences, while also adjusting the materials budget to meet evolving needs *(Information Services, Children's Services, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services)*.

4. Actively acquire material to support literacy development, including resources for learning to read *(Information Services, Children's Services, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services)*.

5. Discover and adopt innovative online and face-to-face strategies for delivering readers' advisory support and fostering engagement with patrons regarding books and media. This includes encouraging patrons to create book reviews, utilizing online forms, launching a coordinated campaign featuring book displays, bookmarks, the library website and digital monitors in the lobby, as well as leveraging social media platforms *(Information Services, Children's Services, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services,*

*Community Relations).*

6. Supply the necessary materials, services and resources to foster economic growth for both individuals and the business sector *(Information Services, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services).*

7. Explore the advantages of eliminating overdue fines and share the results with the Board for additional guidance *(Circulation Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Information Services, Digital/Technical Services).*

8. Enhance the "Library of Things" collection to provide patrons with access to a variety of physical items beyond books *(Circulation Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Information Services, Digital/Technical Services).*

9. Investigate the potential for establishing makerspaces in select library locations *(Circulation Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Information Services, Digital/Technical Services).*

## 1.2 Digital Resources

A yearly survey will reveal that at least 85% of participants believe the library's digital resources effectively support their needs for information, entertainment and learning.

### 1.2 Activities

1. Implement yearly surveys for patrons to assess their satisfaction with the library's digital resources *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations).*

2. Provide a collection of video tutorials for residents that guides them on how to access digital resources, manage their library accounts and utilize various library services *(Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Information Services, Children's Services).*

3. Boost the utilization of chosen databases and online readers' advisory tools by actively promoting them to patrons through staff engagement, enhancing website navigation, and utilizing various promotional strategies such as newsletters, digital monitors in the lobby, shelf talkers and personal recommendations *(Community Relations, Information Services, Digital/Technical Services).*

# Goal 2: Learn

*Citizens will find learning opportunities through the public library by utilizing materials, programs, services and skilled staff.*

**Initiatives**

A. Provide programs, materials and resources to support early learning.

B. Develop and maintain a collection of materials in print and electronic formats selected to supplement formal educational goals and to support lifelong learners of all ages.

C. Guide and assist patrons in attaining the maximum benefit from library resources.

D. Develop programs that address community needs and interests.

E. Foster constructive interactions between patrons and staff to ensure that visitors leave with enduring, favorable impressions of the library.

F. Continue to build a capable team that enthusiastically provides the community excellent service, programs and resources.

G. Encourage employee participation in decision-making, innovative problem-solving and creativity throughout the organization to enhance capabilities, improve employee retention and facilitate succession planning.

H. Empower staff with essential information and training to act in support of the mission, commitments, values and goals of the library and the county.

**Objectives**

**2.1 Programs: Children**

Children's program attendance is projected to increase by 5% (baseline 49,677). Annually, 80% of caregivers report that library programs are of high quality, effectively meet their expectations and encourage children to read, learn and connect with others.

**2.1 Activities**

1. Conduct annual patron surveys that measure the level of patron satisfaction *(Children's Services, Branch Services, Community Relations, Digital/Technical Services)*.

2. Contact local pediatricians to share details about the Ready to Read program and seek their endorsement *(Children's Services, Branch Services, Community Relations)*.

3. Collaborate with local agencies and service providers to create a range of programs focused on promoting the development of infants and toddlers, as well as supporting

effective parenting practices (*Children's Services, Branch Services, Community Relations*).

4. Connect with all county first-grade classes through a combination of on-site guided tours and in-school librarian visits (*Children's Services and Branch Services*).

5. Collaborate with local elementary schools to engage parents by attending school events for family programs or by organizing these programs in conjunction with the schools. Emphasize the significance of lifelong learning, the benefits of learning through play and the importance of library services (*Children's Services, Information Services, Branch Services, Circulation Services*).

6. Create a range of technology training programs tailored to the needs of our community, which may encompass:

    a. Basic computer skills.

    b. Internet safety.

    c. Programming skills.

## 2.2 Programs: Young Adults and Adults

Attendance for young adult and adult programs is projected to increase by 5% (baseline 12,699). Annually, 80% of participants will report that library programs are of high quality, effectively meet their expectations and encourage reading, learning and connecting with others.

### 2.2 Activities

1. Conduct annual patron surveys that measure the level of patron satisfaction (*Information Services, Branch Services, Community Relations, Digital/Technical Services*).

2. Foster and promote consistent communication with librarians and educators in middle and high schools to advocate for library initiatives and to identify and address the need for resources that enhance existing curricula (*Information Services, Branch Services, Digital and Technical Services*).

3. Develop and showcase initiatives aimed at patrons aged 13 to 18 that spark their enthusiasm for reading, the arts, community service, essential life skills, financial literacy, career growth, research assistance, academic support and overall wellness (*Information Services, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services*).

4. Design and showcase engaging programs focused on patron interests, such as book clubs to facilitate group discussions on historical, literary or multicultural themes. Stand-alone topics may encompass:

a. The Right Service at the Right Time database.

b. Job search strategies, resume development, essential job skills, career counseling, retirement planning and resources for small businesses.

c. Life skills covering effective parenting, online banking, digital health management, legal matters, savvy consumer practices, elder care and wellness information.

d. BiblioBoard and Independent Author Project resources.

e. Adult literacy initiatives and test preparation for exams such as the GED, SAT, ACT and GRE *(Information Services, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services)*.

5. Create a range of technology training programs tailored to the needs of our community, covering topics such as:

a. Computer literacy skills.

b. Artificial Intelligence.

c. Emerging electronics.

d. Internet Safety.

## 2.3 Skilled Workforce

To ensure the continuous improvement of their knowledge and skills, boost job satisfaction and provide high-quality service, library professionals and support staff will participate in a minimum of 15 hours and 10 hours, respectively, of professional development each year.

### 2.3 Activities

1. Develop, create and execute a thorough staff development strategy that highlights the mission, values and commitments of the county and library, along with goals and objectives. This plan will focus on fostering effective teamwork, enhancing necessary skills, improving customer service and providing technology training *(Information Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations)*.

2. Enhance employees' abilities in face-to-face marketing and the promotion of library programs, services and resources *(Information Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations)*.

3. Create and execute cross-training programs for employees across library divisions and branches in complementary or interconnected roles *(Information Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services)*.

4. Implement a semi-annual employee survey to assess overall job satisfaction. If necessary, investigate methods to enhance employee contentment *(Information Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations).*

5. Enhance the efforts of the Improved Customer Service committee to foster a culture of outstanding patron service across the organization, driven by employee engagement. One such effort shall be reviewing and assessing patron service challenges to strive for excellence. *(Information Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations).*

6. Enhance the depth, range and relevance of staff expertise by conducting a minimum of two training sessions each year. These sessions should cover essential topics such as artificial intelligence, collection development, readers' advisory services, early learning, electronic resources, patron service and navigating the public catalog *(Information Services, Circulation Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services).*

7. Enhance and expand SharePoint to serve as a comprehensive platform for internal information sharing *(Information Services, Branch Services, Children's Services, Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations).*

8. Evaluate the need for more personnel to meet the growing demands of various community groups and adapt to the evolving ways of delivering services *(Administration, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services, Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations).*

9. Add one Public Services Librarian I to be shared by the Fort McCoy and Reddick public libraries *(Branch Services).*

# Goal 3: Connect

*Residents will discover the public library as a vibrant hub for community engagement, where they can connect with one another, the library and the broader community through various programs, meeting areas, collaborative efforts and partnerships.*

**Initiatives**

A. Strategically connect citizens, agencies and library staff.

B. Demonstrate leadership through collaboration with other organizations to maximize community resources and improve the quality of life for our residents.

C. Offer citizens the opportunity to connect with books and each other through book discussion groups, reading programs for all ages, volunteerism and other personal or social networks.

D. Raise awareness of library services and resources, both internally and externally, physically and virtually.

E. Create opportunities for community involvement in library support.

F. Assist area Friends of the Library groups with "Friend-raising."

G. Evaluate and improve our web and online presence as a virtual gathering place and community relations vehicle.

H. Improve the patron experience in the discovery and use of library resources.

I.  Increase funding from various sources.

J.  Increase volunteer opportunities.

**Objectives**

**3.1 Meeting Rooms**

To foster ongoing connections among community members, the library will enhance the usage of its meeting rooms and will boost the number of distinct groups utilizing these spaces by at least 5 each year.

> **3.1 Activities**
>
> 1. Explore potential funding sources to install digital signage in the lobby of every library. This will ensure that all visitors are informed about ways to engage with others, upcoming meeting room events, library programs and county initiatives (*Digital/Technical Services, Community Relations, Branch Services, Information Services, Children's Services).*
>
> 2. Create a brochure to showcase library meeting rooms and available equipment

*(Community Relations, Information Services).*

## 3.2 Collaboration and Partnerships

Enhance the public library's influence and presence in the community by actively seeking and developing partnerships with public, private and community organizations, aiming to add two new partners annually.

### 3.2 Activities

1. Collaborate with Friends groups to assess various community, business, cultural, health and children's organizations. This will help identify opportunities for potential partnerships, collaborations and contributions *(all staff and Friends of the Library).*

2. Develop a comprehensive partnership strategy aimed at strengthening connections with community organizations throughout the entire system *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations).*

3. Establish new partnerships annually to enhance the efforts of county agencies, service providers and cultural organizations and tailor public library resources to meet their needs and promote their initiatives *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations).*

4. Enhance engagement with the educational system, parent organizations and homeschooling units to explore opportunities for the library to partner and share resources that support students in reaching their academic goals *(Information Services, Children's Services, Branch Services, Community Relations, Digital/Technical Services).*

5. Create a new program in collaboration with CareerSource or CEP aimed at offering support to job seekers, individuals exploring new career paths and those looking for assistance in starting their own businesses *(Information Services, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services, Community Relations).*

6. Explore collaboration possibilities with the Appleton Museum of Art, Ocala Civic Theatre, Marion County Museum of History and Archaeology, Marion Cultural Alliance and various other cultural organizations throughout the county *(Information Services, Children's Services, Community Relations, Branch Services, Digital/Technical Services).*

7. Collaborate more fully with state, county and municipal parks agencies as well as other county departments *(Information Services, Children's Services, Community Relations, Branch Services).*

8. Expand services to senior living centers *(Information Services, Community Relations, Branch Services).*

9. Establish a reciprocal borrower's agreement with each neighboring county *(Administration, Circulation Services).*

10. Explore various funding opportunities through a variety of sources, including Clay Electric, the Felburn Foundation, Ocala/Marion County Community Foundation and more *(Community Relations, Administration, Children's Services, Information Services).*

## 3.3 Community Involvement

Create a plan to enhance opportunities for advocacy efforts, volunteerism and financial backing from both the public and private sectors, as well as community organizations.

### 3.3 Activities

1. Develop fundraising and estate planning materials *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations).*

2. Create a five-year plan outlining desired collections, facility improvements and projects for the library *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations).*

3. Develop a donor recognition plan *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations).*

4. Reach out to schools, local retirement communities and civic organizations to share information about volunteer opportunities at the library *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations).*

## 3.4 Virtual

Provide an informative, beneficial and inviting virtual experience for patrons by boosting funding for digital services and resources by at least 15%.

### 3.4 Activities

1. Build a library website that is user-friendly, welcoming, functional and rich in information *(Information Services, Children's Services, Branch Services, Community Relations, Digital/Technical Services).*

2. Incorporate interactive forms into the library's website, such as applications for library

cards (new and renewals), a feedback form and volunteer applications *(Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations)*.

3. Create an online platform focused on supporting the library by providing simple donation and payment options, while promoting and making it easier for individuals to contribute *(Digital/Technical Services, Circulation Services, Community Relations)*.

4. Expand the use of analytical statistics to make data-informed decisions. *(Administration, Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations)*.

5, Continue to maximize library social media reach with creative, informative, compelling content *(Administration, Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations)*.

## 3.5 Physical

Create a welcoming and secure atmosphere that is both convenient and easily accessible.

### 3.5 Activities

1. Staff will monitor library and grounds, focusing on aspects such as curb appeal, lawn upkeep, litter management, potential safety concerns and both internal and external signage *(Information Services, Children's Services, Circulation Services, Digital/Technical Services, Branch Services, Community Relations)*.

2. Apply for a state construction grant for the expansion of the Freedom Public Library, with potential funding of up to $500,000 *(Administration, Branch Services, Community Relations)*.

3. Implement an outdoor Family Garden at the Headquarters-Ocala Public Library, offering a welcoming space for children and families, along with areas for hosting outdoor library activities *(Children's Services)*.