



*Inspiring and nurturing a vibrant community through exceptional library services.*

**WRI** Williamsburg  
Regional Library

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2023 - 2024

*Adopted:  
March 22, 2023*



# Strategic Plan 2023-2024

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) is a dynamic civic asset. WRL serves the residents of the City of Williamsburg, James City County, and York County, Virginia with quality public library services including information resources, physical and digital collections, learning experiences, programs, and community spaces all delivered with a commitment to excellent customer service. The library offers outstanding traditional library services including professionally curated physical and digital collections, reference and information services, digital literacy and technology resources, programming for all ages, and community spaces for meeting, learning, studying, and reading.

The updated 2023-2024 Strategic Plan is predicated on an enduring commitment to maintaining excellent core library services. WRL will continue to evaluate, refine, and improve the delivery of established services, seek out new audiences, and introduce innovative and relevant services to serve our community during a time defined by rapid cultural, economic, and technological change.

The 2023-2024 Strategic Plan is designed to focus on a two-year timeframe. This plan updates the WRL 2021-2022 Strategic Plan with revised strategic priorities while maintaining the library's historic commitment to a sound Financial Framework.

The plan addresses services and priorities for the library as the country emerges from the pandemic and its associated aftermath. The pandemic, coupled with rapidly evolving technological change, has given rise to accelerated transformational changes in the workplace, business, and non-profit operational models, and also to the delivery of goods, services, and entertainment.

During the upcoming months, WRL will continue to work closely with the funding jurisdictions to establish clarity and direction on library building timelines and locations. Finalized facility plans will enable the library to focus on thoughtful design and planning for enlarged and modern spaces capable of delivering state-of-the-art library services. Expanded space for the creation of content, interactive learning experiences, collaborative work and learning, and community connection are pivotal in the ongoing transformation of the library.

The Strategic Priorities for 2023-2024 are:

- (1) Reinventing library services
- (2) Communicating and raising awareness
- (3) Planning for new and renovated library facilities
- (4) Strengthening outreach services, community connections, and partnerships.

The Financial Framework will continue to serve as a bridge between the Strategic Plan and the annual budgeting and decision-making processes.

**Betsy Fowler**

Library Director

**Jean Stettler**

Chair, Library Board of Trustees



# Acknowledgements

## WRL Board of Trustees

Jean Stettler, Chair

Chris Gareis, Vice-Chair

Felicia Highland, Secretary

Grace Boone

Feather Foster

Natalie Miller-Moore

Theresa Owens

Nina Simone

Toni Sturdivant

Nicole Trifone

Andrew Trivette

Sam Sadler – President of the Friends of WRL Foundation (*ex officio*)

Betsy Fowler – Library Director (*ex officio*)

## WRL Leadership Team

Betsy Fowler, Library Director

Sandy Towers, Assistant Library Director

Carrie Binsfeld, Finance and General Services Director

Eletha Davis, Outreach Services Director

Benjamin Goldberg, Development Officer

Rob Haas, Program Services and Security Director

Lisa Hilleary, Technical Services Manager

Barbara Jones, Adult Outreach Manager

Mark Lutner, IT Director

Desiree Parker, Marketing and Communications Manager

Alicia Phinney, Circulation Services Director

Melissa Simpson, Adult Services Director

Ben Strohm, Youth Services Director



# Introduction

The Williamsburg Regional Library's 2023-2024 Strategic Plan builds on the library's existing strategic plan and acknowledges this time of rapid change with the understanding that success in the 21st century world means we must develop new types of public services and new ways of delivering traditional library services. WRL will embrace its role as a community anchor and champion of democracy and information access. WRL will reimagine delivery services to nurture learning and enhance educational and family support, foster connections, and help build strong, resilient communities. The library will be a tireless innovator and energetic partner with other community organizations, leaders, and local support to lift up area citizens and enable them to navigate and succeed in this rapidly changing world.

This plan identifies interim goals for the next two years, as the library works to ensure the continuity of core services, develops responsive new services targeted to evolving community needs, and responds to the need for improved public facilities. The achievement of these goals relies on the continued success of the regional library system, leveraging economies of scale through shared costs and combined resources. The regional system requires a close working relationship with James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and York County to continue to support the library operating budget and fund critically needed renovations and new facilities.

## Mission

Inspiring and nurturing a vibrant community through exceptional library services.

## Vision

Williamsburg Regional Library will contribute to a strong, informed, and resilient community by providing access to relevant resources, programs, and public spaces. Public libraries are essential to a vibrant community and a healthy democracy. WRL delivers outstanding, accessible, and equitable library services to all members of a diverse region. WRL sparks innovation, inspires creativity and learning, and creates connections. WRL empowers individuals to transform their lives.

## Values

- Providing outstanding customer service
- Offering balanced, relevant, and responsive collections
- Supporting lifelong learning
- Providing equitable access to library services
- Adapting services to meet changing community needs
- Embracing technology, innovation, and positive change
- Offering a wide variety of learning experiences
- Providing welcoming public spaces where reading, learning, and imagination thrive
- Providing civic spaces for communicating, collaborating, and exchanging ideas
- Supporting a healthy democracy by encouraging civic dialogue, the civil exchange of ideas, and promoting understanding of a variety of viewpoints on challenging issues
- Valuing, recognizing, and investing in a well-trained, public service-focused staff
- Fostering a positive and diverse workplace culture
- Managing its resources in an ethical and fiscally responsible manner



## Financial Framework

- The City of Williamsburg, James City County, and York County will continue to participate in the regional library contract for library services. All three jurisdictions will continue to fund the operating budget of the Williamsburg Regional Library to provide quality public library services for their residents.
- The library will continue to receive annual State Aid funding that WRL will continue to designate to fund library collections.
- The Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library Foundation (FWRLF) will continue to provide non-budgeted resources in the form of specific grants for innovative collections, programs, and services as funding allows. The FWRLF may conduct special fundraising campaigns for projects as identified jointly with the library board and the director to support the library strategic priorities.
- The library will build new and strengthen existing partnerships with local businesses, non-profits, and community organizations to reach new users and provide more comprehensive and focused services. In collaboration with the FWRLF, the library will energetically pursue outside funding sources through grants to support new initiatives.
- The library will continue to creatively repurpose and enhance spaces in the existing facilities to meet community needs and will work closely with the City of Williamsburg and James City County to request and invest CIP funding in renovations and a single new library facility or two new libraries.
- The library will continue to repurpose staff vacancies to address the most compelling priorities.



# Strategic Priorities

## 2023-2024

**Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) is focused on four Strategic Priorities:**

### **1. Reinventing Library Services**

WRL will build on its legacy as a trusted public institution to help individuals navigate complex issues, promote community conversations, personal connections, and access to resources. WRL will continuously evaluate and reinvent public library services with a focus on user experience and relevancy. WRL will help meet the challenges faced by the community, including diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the need for educational support, job help, and access to library resources. WRL will enrich the lives of the community with new learning experiences and opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and connection. WRL will continue to provide an exceptional library experience for community members who value and rely on the library as a source of information, programs, services, and materials to read, listen to, and view.

### **2. Communicating and raising awareness**

WRL is well-known for providing exceptional services. It will continue to communicate the role and value of the public library in the community. The library will build on this foundation, raising awareness of library services, spaces, and programs with a robust marketing strategy and strong digital presence that incorporates the website, social media, and multimedia productions. WRL will expand its efforts to engage non-users and underserved members of the community, working with community partners, local government and nonprofits.

### **3. Planning for new and renovated library facilities**

WRL will work closely with local jurisdictions to plan, design, and construct a new library in Williamsburg and a possible third library in James City County in response to the urgent need to replace the functionally failing Williamsburg Library branch building. The new library buildings will serve a rapidly growing population and accommodate evolving library services. WRL will continue renovations of the James City County Library, make ongoing interim repairs and improvements in the existing Williamsburg Library building, while utilizing outside spaces to support community engagement. WRL will seek expanded spaces for growing services to the Grove Community and other underserved neighborhoods.

### **4. Strengthening Outreach Services, Community Connections, and Partnerships**

WRL will update and implement a dynamic outreach plan to equitably serve disadvantaged and vulnerable populations through community collaborations, outreach activities, and investment in staffing, digital access, collections, and educational programs. WRL will work closely with regional educational institutions and other partners to identify community needs, maximize effective use of combined resources, and amplify the impact of the library.