

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025



HINSDALE
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Prepared by **Ivy Group**

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From the Board of Trustees

A lot has changed since the Hinsdale Public Library produced its last strategic plan in 2019. Most noticeably, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to temporarily close our building and develop new ways for patrons to access resources. We continue to adjust to massive technological advances, such as eBooks and other online resources, our patrons' increased use of those technologies, and the expectation that materials are available more quickly. The Hinsdale community, moreover, has become more diverse.

Some things, of course, have remained the same. The village continues to be tightknit and proud of its excellent public schools, historic architecture, dynamic festivals, and vibrant downtown restaurants and stores. The Library still is the heart of the community, supporting lifelong learning through innovative educational and cultural experiences. HPL also remains a stimulant for curiosity and a center for intellectual freedom.

We began the strategic planning process in the spring of 2022. We believed it was an opportune time to step back and think about what Hinsdale wants from its Library over the next three years and beyond. We had not done either a deep dive into the village data and demographics or a communitywide survey since 2015. We hired a consultant, interviewed community leaders and individuals representing various demographic groups within Hinsdale, and conducted a survey of residents. Our goal was to create a strategic plan that guides the Library in supporting the educational, informational, and recreational pursuits of our village's residents.

This report details our findings and the priorities that emerged, and outlines goals and tactics to advance these key themes. We appreciate the village's support and guidance, and we look forward to working with patrons to further enhance HPL's value to the community.



Project Overview

In early 2022, Hinsdale Public Library's Board of Trustees and its Strategic Planning Committee set out to create a vision for the Library and how it can best serve the community over the next three years and beyond.

The strategic plan that emerged is informed by a wide-ranging analysis of available data as well as collaboration with Library users, non-users, partners, and stakeholders throughout the village. This research confirmed much that we knew about Hinsdale and what residents want from and appreciate about their public library, including the importance of children's programs and traditional library materials like books and newspapers. That outreach reinforced our view that the Library has wide-ranging support from a well-resourced community.

However, the research also highlighted ways the community has changed since the Library's last strategic plan in 2019. We learned that Hinsdale's population includes more older adult households,

and a growing segment of residents with Asian roots. Reflecting the accelerated use of technology, patrons say they want more digital materials. And they want more opportunities to connect, including additional programs for teens and adults.

To think about other ways the Library can meet patron needs and expectations, we asked community leaders, stakeholders, and staff about the major challenges facing Hinsdale and its residents. They listed: rising housing prices, transportation shortcomings, growing political divisiveness, declining social well-being and mental health outcomes, particularly post-pandemic.

A community survey and face-to-face interviews also revealed that many stakeholders and the general public are not fully aware of HPL's many programs and services. A market segmentation study identified households without current HPL patrons. We have developed tactics to engage those non-user households and also increase participation among active users.

Our key findings: Residents say HPL's most important role is providing physical and digital media, but they want those materials more quickly. They appreciate the Library's programs for children, but asked for more, and also for increased offerings geared to adults. They see a role for the Library in facilitating civic engagement and community gatherings. And many of them are unaware of the breadth of the Library's programs and services.

What emerged from this process are four areas of focus that provide the framework for HPL's new strategic plan:

1. Access and Convenience: bringing the Library's wealth of services directly to all village residents when and how they need them
2. Education and Enrichment: supporting students in the award-winning school system and providing opportunities for experiential, lifelong learning for adults—through cutting-edge technology, up-to-date materials, and engaging events and activities
3. Connection and Community: making the Library a central and welcoming gathering place in the community, with opportunities to learn, engage, and discover
4. Awareness: communicating more extensively and effectively with both current Library users and non-users about our services and offerings

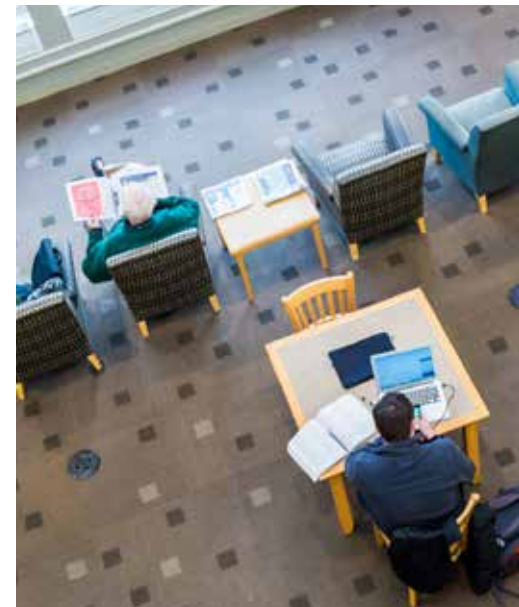
Those four strategic priorities set the road map for the next three years, and will guide the Library's investment in collections, services, and spaces. Each year, the staff will develop specific tactics and initiatives that support those priorities and present them for the board to review.

To achieve the goals outlined in this strategic plan, the Library will dedicate resources including:

- Staffing levels and training to support exceptional customer service
- Reallocated funds for expanded digital collections
- Reallocated funds for additional programming initiatives
- Institutional support for community partnerships
- Flexible space design for optimal utilization

- Investment in remote service delivery or access
- Advertising and outreach efforts
- Tools and technologies that allow more staff time to be redeployed to patron service

We believe working to meet these priorities will reap myriad benefits, provide a high return on the community's investment and ensure that the Library continues to support the educational, informational, and recreational pursuits of Hinsdale residents.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

Access and Convenience

Hinsdale residents have high expectations for customer service and experiences. HPL can best serve them with frictionless digital access, convenient pick-up and drop-off locations, and personalized services.

Research Highlights

- According to the latest census data, 97% of residents have a computer and 96% have broadband internet access at home, making digital materials accessible to almost the entire community.
- According to market segmentation, the largest three household segments in Hinsdale have above average to the highest levels of technology use.
- Staff identified transportation barriers that prevent residents under 16 and over 65 from visiting the Library.
- Board members indicated a need for homebound delivery services and expanded offerings for residents with disabilities.
- Community leaders recommended improving the space available for remote workers, and increasing recreational and learning opportunities for residents with disabilities.
- Staff forum discussions revealed the opportunity to expand Library offerings that surprise and delight users.
- Respondents to the community survey indicated that it is “very important” the Library be a source for physical and digital media (84%) and provide space for books and other material (71%). Open-ended responses revealed a preference for expanding digital collections.
- According to the benchmarking study, HPL has a high staff to population ratio, enabling staff to provide hands-on, customized service.
- Fiscal year 2019 data in the benchmarking study indicate that increasing promotion of the growing digital collections is likely to boost usage.



GOAL

Provide frictionless access to HPL digital offerings

TACTICS

- Reduce hold times for digital titles by shifting collection development budget from print to digital, and dedicating staff to monitor usage on all digital platforms
- Investigate alternatives to the current HPL mobile app to offer a more seamless user experience
- Seek ways to improve discovery and usage of digital resources (eBooks, audio, music & film, newspapers, databases)

GOAL

Increase use of HPL materials and services by prioritizing user convenience

TACTICS

- Reduce hold times by purchasing more high-demand and Lucky Day titles, informed by tools such as Ingram HIIT list, Collection HQ, and expanded staff training on collection development
- Leverage staff expertise to further customize patron services such as book club support, personalized recommendations, and one-on-one tech help
- Provide pop-up library services at high-traffic events to save residents a separate trip to the Library (e.g., block parties, school and church festivals, etc.)



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: **Education and Enrichment**

The two school districts that serve Hinsdale students consistently outperform state averages. According to 2019 data from the Illinois State Board of Education, both districts spend more per pupil than the state average and in both districts, students score significantly higher on state assessments than the state average. Community feedback confirmed that the Library is delivering high-quality library service to young children and their families. While continuing to excel at youth services, HPL can focus additional resources on the tween and teen audiences and their evolving needs.

Hinsdale is also home to many older and/or retired professionals who have time to explore their interests in travel, current events, and other enrichment activities. The Library can use the talents of these residents to support outstanding academic achievement and improve the health span of senior citizens.

Research Highlights

- 32% of Hinsdale residents are under 18 years old, compared to 22% nationally.
- According to market segmentation, 65% of all households fall into the Mature Years Lifestage class. Two of the five largest demographic segments in Hinsdale consist of mostly retired residents over the age of 65.
- According to the community survey, 43% of users visit the Library primarily for reasons related to hobbies or personal interests.
- 65% of all community survey respondents believe that it is “very important” that the Library be a center for lifelong learning, and 61% believe that it is “very important” that the Library provide space to learn and study.
- Board members identified a need to attract teenagers to the Library, possibly with tech programs and social events, and to support college preparation with programs and materials.
- Community leaders perceive HPL as a key supporter of student success, and identified ways to meet the specific needs of middle and high school students, such as refreshing the teen lounge.
- Discussions during the staff forum identified opportunities to engage teenagers through expanded volunteer opportunities and partnerships with schools.
- The benchmarking study revealed that HPL did not offer as many programs overall as its peers, but strong attendance for current programs indicates potential demand.

GOAL

Support students with collections, programs and services tailored to their needs

TACTICS

- Expand the tradition of studying for finals at the Library by providing expanded hours, temporary workspaces, refreshments, and mental health support such as on-site counselors, visits from therapy dogs, and stress-buster kits
- Empower teens to share their favorite titles via shelf talkers and customized booklists
- Provide and promote test prep material in multiple formats for high school students

GOAL

Engage Hinsdaleans with collections and programs that focus on culture, hobbies and entertainment

TACTICS

- Realign staff responsibilities to support additional programming duties
- Deliver more high-interest programming on topics like travel, sports, music, and current events
- Support older residents' health and reduce isolation with daytime programs that meet their interests, such as Library-sponsored book clubs, international film festivals, movement classes, and downsizing workshops



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: **Connection and Community**

Hinsdale prides itself on its close-knit, small-town atmosphere. The pandemic and recent political stresses have isolated residents, but the community trusts the Library as a source for impartial information, and its central location makes it a natural gathering place. The tactics supporting this strategic priority will strengthen community ties and support social well-being.

Research Highlights

- According to the latest Census data, the number of Hinsdale residents with roots in Asia, and the number of residents identifying as multiracial has increased since 2010.
- 18% of Hinsdale households speak a language other than English at home.
- Community leaders and representatives suggested expanding Chinese and Hindi language collections to reflect changes in demographics and providing programming that celebrates diverse cultures.
- Market segmentation revealed that 45% of residents live within a one-mile radius of the Library.
- 75% of community survey respondents believe it is “very important” or “important” for the Library to expand partnerships that foster greater cultural understanding.



- 79% of community survey respondents believe it is “very important” or “important” for the Library to provide space for art displays and cultural events and to relax and socialize (59%).
- Benchmarking revealed a discrepancy between the number of hours open (HPL ranked first among the peer group) and visits per capita per hours open, and per staff (HPL ranked third). That suggests an opportunity to increase usage and perceptions of HPL as a community hub.

- According to community leader interviews, HPL has the opportunity to play a role in improving social well-being, making newcomers feel welcome in the village, and preserving community spirit through community engagement.
- Board members reported a need to respond to the challenges and isolation of the pandemic and review the Library’s strategy in light of new learnings.
- Community leaders identified the Library as an institution that “can help promote understanding of residents with diverse backgrounds or special needs.”
- Participants in the staff forum identified Hinsdale’s greatest needs as an environment that fosters equity, diversity, and inclusion and opportunities for social development and interaction.

GOAL

Reflect changing Hinsdale demographics and consumer expectations through collection development, services, and programs

TACTICS

- Build Chinese and Hindi language collections, and materials relating to culture, to support the village's fastest-growing demographics
- Audit the depth and breadth of our collections
- Promote programs that accommodate a range of abilities, behaviors, and sensory needs

GOAL

Structure spaces within the Library to foster connections

TACTICS

- Explore partnership opportunities to create outdoor areas that incorporate shade and connect residents to nature—such as a pollinator garden, vegetable garden, or bird feeder
- Reconfigure floor space in the Library with flexible furniture that expands program space and allows for collaborative and independent work
- Investigate alternative furniture and configuration of the children's space to enhance safe, interactive playspace

GOAL

Develop partnerships that leverage community resources to improve outcomes for residents, partner organizations, and the Library

TACTICS

- Expand partnerships with local schools and school districts to promote HPL offerings and support academic achievement outside school hours
- Create a community liaison committee to develop partnerships and outreach
- Increase HPL's visibility in the community through new or expanded partnerships with community organizations, possibly including Newcomers and Neighbors, Chamber of Commerce, Wellness House, Rotary Club, Hinsdale Area Moms, Community House, and *The Hinsdalean*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: **Awareness of HPL Programs and Services**

HPL has a strong presence in the community, with the majority of residents availing themselves of at least a portion of the Library's offerings. The Library has a commendable penetration rate, with 62% of households having used their library cards in the past three years. Similarly, all of the community leaders interviewed support the Library's mission. However, both residents and leaders were surprised by the breadth of HPL's offerings. By drawing attention to HPL's myriad collections, services, and programs, the Library can connect residents to existing resources, improving the return on investment and enriching lives. Increased awareness of the good the Library is doing in the community can be converted into support for capital campaigns and other initiatives.

Community members and leaders prefer to receive information about the Library primarily via HPL's newsletter, email, and website, as well as on social media. By nurturing existing relationships with media contacts, HPL can earn media coverage of newsworthy events in public radio interviews, local newspaper and website articles, and segments on local cable Channel 6.

GOAL
Increased awareness
of the breadth of
HPL's collections,
programs, services,
and expertise

TACTICS

- Increase visibility of instant online library card sign-up on the Library website and promote on social media
- Use popular existing channels of communications, such as those maintained by the Chamber of Commerce, local schools, local cable channel 6, the Village of Hinsdale, and the Hinsdale Area Moms group

- Create more effective messaging and instruction for all the apps used to read, listen to, and watch content



Project Methodology

To prioritize Hinsdale Public Library's projects and to understand the village at the sidewalk level, the board hired The Ivy Group, a consultant with extensive library experience. The Ivy team, working with our strategic planning committee, conducted an intensive data review, then engaged with internal stakeholders, community leaders, and members of the public.

Data analysis highlighted strengths as well as areas of need and helped the Library set priorities for the strategic plan:

- An environmental scan created a snapshot of the community based on Census data, Library reports and surveys, and regional reports.
- A benchmarking study compared HPL to four peers across the country, and gave insight about how the Library stacked up against state and national averages.
- Finally, a market segmentation study shed light on the behaviors of the village's largest consumer groups, uncovering actionable insights on the habits of Library users, and crucially, non-users.

In addition to that quantitative data analysis, the team collected qualitative information from Library stakeholders as well as the community at large:

- Interviews with board members and a board/staff forum gave ground-level insight into the Library's organizational health.
- Face-to-face interviews with a wide range of local leaders, representatives of village organizations, and individuals from various demographic groups in Hinsdale helped identify current pressures and opportunities in the village and offered outside perspectives on the Library.
- Finally, a community survey garnered 467 responses from a wide range of residents, providing details on how they currently use the Library (or why they don't) and what they want to see from HPL in the future.



Background Information

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Village of Hinsdale is a tight-knit community proud of its excellent public schools, historic architecture, and dynamic festivals. A western suburb of Chicago located in DuPage and Cook Counties, it offers small-town charm with convenient access to a wealth of local, regional, and international economic and cultural opportunities. The boutique downtown district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and designated landmarks include structures designed by noted architects like William G. Barfield and R. Harold Zook. This historic backdrop provides the setting for many treasured regional and local events, from the farmer's market and Uniquely Thursdays summer music series, to the village's 4th of July parade, Fall Family Festival, and Christmas Walk.

Population

According to the 2020 Census, 17,395 people live in Hinsdale, a 3% increase compared to the 2010 Census. The

village has a higher median age than the state, the nation, and the surrounding counties. However, that is balanced by a proportionally larger school-age population. Seniors over the age of 65 comprise 14% of the population, on par with its neighbors, the state, and the nation. The three largest racial groups in Hinsdale are white, Asian, and Black or African American with 5% of residents belonging to two or more races. Asians are the fastest growing group, comprising 6% of residents in 2010 and 13% in 2020. The ethnic group Hispanic/Latino makes up 4% of the population.

Education

The Village of Hinsdale is served by two school districts. All schools were rated commendable to exemplary by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2019, the most recent year for which full data is available. Both districts spend more per pupil and achieve higher test scores than the state average. Adult residents of Hinsdale have higher educational attainment than average for the region,

state, and nation. Almost 98% of people over 25 years old in Hinsdale have graduated from high school and nearly 81% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Economics

The median household income in Hinsdale is \$203,368, which is 54% higher than the DuPage County median and 69% higher than the national median. 2.2% of Hinsdale residents live in poverty and according to the Community Memorial Foundation (CMF) data dashboard, 5.6% of people over 65 are living below the poverty level. The most common occupations are management, sales, and business and financial operations. The median value of owner-occupied homes in Hinsdale is \$884,700, which is 65% higher than the DuPage County median and 75% higher than the national median. According to the Census and CMF, 13.6% of residents rent, and 46.7% of them are rent-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on rent.

DETAILED PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Environmental Scan

The consulting team from Ivy Group reviewed and analyzed Census Bureau demographic data, previous HPL surveys, budgets, and annual reports, along with economic development reports and other regional information to create an environmental scan of the forces shaping Hinsdale.

Benchmarking Study

This exercise creates an accurate picture in time to evaluate the Library's performance across a variety of measures. Using published data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (2019), HPL was compared against four national peer libraries that share similar operating expenses, service area size, and demographic indicators, as well as against a "composite library system" representing the average of the top quartile by budget of all libraries in the United States serving a population between 10,000-24,999. The library of

Lake Forest, Illinois, was included as a regional comparison but was not part of the peer set. Using the results of this study, HPL identified weaknesses and strengths and established a baseline for measuring progress.

Market Segmentation Study

Claritas' MyBestSegments lifestyle systems define every household in the U.S. by distinct types, called "segments," to provide a comprehensive picture of who lives where and what they are like. The largest segments in Hinsdale are called Movers & Shakers, Networked Neighbors, Upper Crust, Gray Power, and Middleburg Managers. Descriptions of each segment can be found at claritas360.claritas.com/mybestsegments. The study identified key demographics, lifestyle characteristics, consumer behavior, and media preferences of HPL users and non-users. These insights can guide decision making for services, collections, and programs and inform more effective marketing strategies. Claritas output data is proprietary; Claritas' license agreements do not allow for sharing raw data.

Board Member Interviews

In March 2022, Ivy Group consultants conducted Zoom interviews with the seven Hinsdale Public Library Trustees about local strengths and challenges and how HPL's strategic plan can address future needs.

Planning Session

On April 27, 2022, Library management, staff, and Board members met with Ivy Group consultants to review consumer trends, discuss and prioritize areas of need, and conduct a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) exercise.

Community Leader Interviews

Library leadership and trustees interviewed 33 members of the Hinsdale community to determine community challenges and priorities. Those interviewed included government, business, religious, school, neighborhood and student leaders, as well as HPL "power users" and representatives of various demographic groups.

Online Community Surveys

From June 6-30, 2022, the Library solicited community input via an online survey platform. An online survey is an effective way to engage the public in an inclusive, transparent manner. More than 95% of households in Hinsdale have a computer and broadband access at home. 467 individuals participated in the survey, and 45% took the opportunity to expand on how the Library might become a better resource for them. The survey identified the needs and preferences of the community with respect to public library use, probed reasons why households do not currently use Library services and solicited ideas to develop future priorities for Library offerings.



Final Planning Summit

Our consultants from The Ivy Group presented the research and their findings and recommendations at an all-day planning summit attended by the Library management team, additional staff members, and HPL board members on August 12, 2022. Priorities, goals and tactics were brainstormed and discussed.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who gave time and thought to support the strategic planning process. We are grateful to every resident who took time to participate in our community survey.

Special thanks to all the Hinsdale Public Library staff members who shared their experiences, ideas, feedback and enthusiasm throughout the process.

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Lizzy Boden, Adult Services Manager
Emily Borsa, Collection Services Manager
Molly Castor, Marketing, Outreach, & Data Manager
Martha Kennedy, Patron Services Manager
Nancy Marvan, Office Manager
Lisa Winchell, Youth Services Manager



ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES

Heather Bereckis, Superintendent of Parks & Recreation, Village of Hinsdale

Ann Marie Berlino, Director, Hinsdale Community Preschool

Brad Bloom, Assistant Village Manager, Village of Hinsdale

Maggie Buoy, Social Worker, Hinsdale Township High School District 86

Tom Cauley, President, Village of Hinsdale

Annette DeAngelis, Special Education, Hinsdale Township High School District 86

Larysa Domino, Realtor, @properties

Andrea Ellexson, Director of Special Education, Hinsdale Township High School District 86

Eva Field, President & CEO, Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce

Anna Fraczkowska, Director, Magnolia Senior Living

Hector Garcia, Superintendent, Community Consolidated School District 181

Kathleen Gargano, Village Manager, Village of Hinsdale

Jennifer Hart, Director, Hinsdale Covenant Church Preschool

Katie Hines-Shah, Senior Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church

Dan Janowick, Executive Director, Hinsdale Community House

Penny Johnson, Director of Christian Education and Administration Manager, Union Church of Hinsdale

Carissa Kapcar, member, Union Church of Hinsdale

Cristina Kinsey, Transition Center Director, Hinsdale Township High School District 86

Lisa Kolavennu, Executive Director, Wellness House

Terry Landschoot, Co-President, Newcomers and Neighbors of the Greater Hinsdale Area

Pam Lannom, Editor, *The Hinsdalean*

Ron Ludwigson, Owner, Kramer Foods

Wendy Michalski, Director, HCS Family Services

Tom Norton, Rotary Club of Hinsdale

Nicole Rude, MRC Director, Hinsdale Middle School

Cassandra Shields, Special Education, Hinsdale Township High School District 86

William Walsh, Principal, Hinsdale Central High School



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Lani Anderson, Hinsdale Resident

Mridu Garg, Hinsdale Resident

Brian Klink, Hinsdale Central High School Student

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