



HINSDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-25



February 2023

Dear Hinsdale residents:

On behalf of the board of trustees and the staff at the Hinsdale Public Library, we are pleased to share with you an overview of the Library's strategic plan for 2023-25.

When we began talking about a new strategic plan in early 2022, we realized that the past three years of upheaval and adjustment made this the perfect time to look at how the Library is serving the community—and more importantly, what the community wants and expects from us. So many things have changed about the way we live and work, the way we communicate, and the way we access and consume content. What did all that mean for the Library and its service to Hinsdale residents?

For answers, we conducted the most extensive and thoughtful strategic planning process in more than a decade. We hired The Ivy Group, a leading consulting firm with special expertise working with libraries and other local government organizations, and began the project in the spring.

Led by the Ivy team, our research included an environmental scan, with an in-depth review of our community demographics; a market segmentation study; an online survey of residents that garnered more than 450 respondents; three dozen one-on-one interviews with Hinsdale leaders and community members; benchmarking with peer libraries around the country; and, finally, two in-person working sessions with our seven trustees and staff members.



What did we find?

Some things we uncovered probably won't surprise you:

- The community has become more diverse over the past decade; in particular, the percentage of residents with roots in Asia is 13%, more than double the number from 2010.
- One of the Library's sweet spots remains providing materials and programs for younger patrons. That's both good and appropriate—since a third of Hinsdale residents are younger than 18 years old, compared to only 22% nationally.
- We are a very well-educated and high-tech group of people: 81% of Hinsdaleans over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree (or more) and virtually every household has access to a computer and to high-speed internet.
- For many of you, the Library is a place to learn, work, and play—and you want to come together to do so.

But our research also yielded some **aha moments:**

- In our high-tech, content-saturated world, you want books! (That's very gratifying for us library people!) And you want them when you want them—including quick access to the hottest new titles and faster turnaround times on materials placed on hold.
- You also want programs. We found that we offer fewer programs than our peers, but that the attendance at our events is comparatively high. That suggests a need to increase programming and also to redeploy staff to support those efforts.
- Overall, Hinsdale is older than we thought. Two-thirds of our households fall into the Mature Years lifestage groups—primarily retired empty nesters who are over 65.
- Not only is the community more diverse than it was 10 years ago, but 18% of Hinsdale households speak a language other than English at home.
- Both online survey participants and community leaders believe the Library has a role to play in bringing the community together, reducing stress, and improving social well-being—particularly post-pandemic.
- Finally, you told us you love the Library, but were surprised by the breadth of our offerings.



The board and staff synthesized all that qualitative and quantitative information and ended up with four strategic priorities. These form the basis of our strategic plan and will guide our work and our choices over the next three years.

Read the full plan >

hinsdalelibrary.info/plan



Strategic Priorities

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 our 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

USING THOSE PRIORITIES AS OUR GUIDE, WE DEVELOPED A SET OF GOALS AND TACTICS FOR 2023 AND BEYOND.

To meet those goals, we will be reallocating funds and restructuring some staff responsibilities, seeking out new and enhanced community partnerships, and investing in new tools and technologies.

What will this look like in practice? Our team has already begun to put some of these ideas into action. For instance, we're already improving access: if you walk into the Library today, front and center is an expanded display of "Lucky Day" copies of the most popular recent books—to get those best-selling titles in your hands faster than ever.

To foster connections within the Library, the board is working on a new master plan to evaluate the space we have and how to use it more effectively and more flexibly.

And our staff already has set in motion an expanded programming lineup for 2023, with events designed to educate and enrich.

You can comb through our research and read about all of the goals and tactics in detail on our website, where we've posted the full version of the three-year strategic plan.

And stay tuned as we use this new plan to spur new ideas... How about pop-up services or remote delivery to make getting books easier? More outdoor spaces and programs? Conversation circles for Chinese or Hindi speakers? Efforts to reduce isolation among our aging residents? We'll be discussing ideas like these over the next three years.

We believe this new plan will provide a high return on the community's investment in the Library and help ensure that we continue to support the educational, informational, and recreational pursuits of residents of all ages—as we have done for more than 125 years.

Our sincere thanks to everyone in the community who shared opinions, ideas, and experiences during our research. But most importantly, we'd like to thank you for your ongoing support. All of us, board members and staff, love books and love libraries. What gets us really excited is finding new ways that the Library can make your lives smarter, richer, easier, and more fun.

We hope to see you soon at the Library!



Julie Liesse
President, Board of Trustees