



Yonkers
Public Library



Inspiring Staff
Inspiring Spaces
Inspiring Yonkers
Strategic Plan 2023-2027

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Since the earliest days, libraries have served to collect, organize, preserve, and share knowledge. And this is still surely the case: our library system and dedicated staff serve the third largest city in the State of New York, and are an invaluable source of information and knowledge to the people of Yonkers.

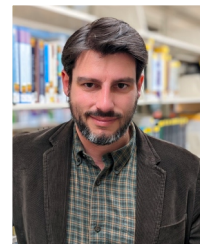
But libraries are also so much more. Since our last Strategic Plan was published, YPL adapted and performed services we couldn't have imagined at the time: YPL rapidly moved to provide reliable information and vaccination clinics at the onset of the coronavirus; served as a voter registration and early voting site; seamlessly transitioned in-person programming to virtual settings, and when it was safe, vastly expanded access to meeting rooms and spaces; and continued to welcome patrons with newly refurbished work and play spaces within our three branches.

Today, with the worst of the epidemic behind us, this plan sets forth a vision for a future full of promise. Yonkers Public Library will continue to offer the services you have come to expect and count on in ways big and small. But we are not stopping there. How can we reach ALL of the people of Yonkers? How can we surprise and delight patrons with new and sometimes unexpected offerings? How can we do all this in a way that doesn't just meet people's basic needs, but really inspires them to grow?

We welcome you to read on, and join us for this exciting new chapter.



Nancy Maron
President, Board of Trustees



Jesse Montero
Library Director



MISSION

Yonkers Public Library is an essential and dynamic institution whose dedicated staff provide outstanding service, meaningful collections, and impactful programs in welcoming and inspiring spaces.

VISION

Yonkers Public Library improves life in Yonkers for everyone by fostering literacy, culture, connection, and community.

VALUES

- > **Everyone belongs** at the library
- > **We treat all people** with respect and trust
- > **We deliver exceptional services** and experiences, every day
- > **We welcome everyone** into our inspiring spaces
- > **We empower and inspire people** through knowledge and personal growth
- > **We celebrate and preserve** Yonkers' history and diverse culture
- > **We amplify our impact** through partnerships with government agencies, nonprofit organizations and local businesses
- > **We recruit and develop** talented and diverse staff

STRATEGIC GOALS



Goal 1

Everyone Belongs Here

Increasing Access Points, Reducing Barriers, and Building Bridges to Library Use.

Goal 2

Deliver an Exceptional Library Experience

Improving Experiences with Library Operations, Technology, and Collections.

Goal 3

We're Your Partner for Life (YPL)

Developing programs and collections with an eye to remaining relevant in our patron's lives at all stages of their personal and professional development through strategic partnerships throughout the city.

Goal 4

Inspiring Staff, Inspiring Spaces, Inspiring Yonkers

Becoming a source of civic pride for Yonkers residents, who regard the library as an important reason why Yonkers is a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Goal 1:

Everyone Belongs Here

Increasing Access Points, Reducing Barriers, and Building Bridges to Library Use

YPL will broaden and deepen its impact for all people in Yonkers by making services more accessible through onsite improvements, online services, and outreach activities.

Objective 1:

Expand language services - especially Spanish - to better serve those in our community for whom English is not a first language

- A. Recruit and hire more Spanish-speaking staff and offer incentives for current staff to learn basic Spanish.
- B. Establish consistent bilingual signage system-wide.
- C. Translate YPL.org into multiple languages, including regular marketing in Spanish to better engage the community.
- D. Expand Spanish language and bilingual collections and programs and make them more findable in our buildings and on our digital platforms.
- E. Grow partnership with Literacy Solutions and VIVE School and develop new partnerships to expand ESOL and citizenship classes and conversation groups in English and Spanish.
- F. Celebrate Hispanic/Latino/Latinx culture by participating in city-wide festivals and events .

Objective 2:

Plan and implement Universal Accessibility for all YPL spaces and services

- A. Begin the campaign to make Crestwood Library and Will Library fully ADA accessible.
- B. Incorporate Universal Design principles into new facilities projects and signage so all library spaces are inviting and inclusive.
- C. Ensure YPL.org is W3C compliant.
- D. Equip buildings with new assistive technologies.
- E. Work closely with Mayor's Disability Advisory Board, community stakeholders with disabilities, and other organizations to ensure the library is accessible and inviting to all.

Objective 3:

Extend the reach of YPL beyond its walls

- A. Improve YPL's representation and visibility across all Yonkers communities and at citywide cultural celebrations.
- B. Assess the feasibility of reintroducing a bookmobile service to Yonkers.
- C. Explore the potential of establishing library collections at daycare centers, senior and affordable housing facilities, community centers, and public schools without existing media labs.
- D. Engage with all Yonkers residents through text messaging, chat, and social media and create opportunities for user-contributed content.
- E. Invite lapsed library users to return to the library through fine forgiveness and "amnesty" programs.
- F. Cultivate and grow the audience for virtual programming that was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- G. Ensure that YPL's e-book collections and digital resources are promoted widely and accessed broadly.
- H. Leverage YPL's deep reach in the community to build partnerships and collaborations by designating a staff position for outreach and partnership management.

Objective 4:

Increase public awareness of YPL's resources and services

- A. Develop a marketing plan that includes new logo, graphic/branding standards, signage system, messaging and brand promise all usable in English and Spanish.
- B. Identify key market segments and train staff in promoting our services to distinct population groups.
- C. Redesign YPL.org to improve search, browsing, and self-service features to deliver a superior user experience.
- D. Create quarterly campaigns that generate awareness, stimulate interest, and elevate YPL's profiles and accomplishments.
- E. Develop an integrated digital strategy to engage younger audiences through YPL.org, mobile applications, and social networks.
- F. Promote offerings through increased press contacts and releases, regular e-newsletters, and engagement across all major social media platforms.
- G. Build organizational capacity to develop and sustain in-housing marketing activities.
- H. Hire a dedicated marketing manager.

Goal 2:

Deliver an Exceptional Library Experience

Improving Experiences with Library Operations, Technology, and Collections

We want everyone who engages with YPL to feel they benefited from and enjoyed the experience. Helpful staff, efficient transactions, clean and well-ordered buildings and stacks, and modern, user-friendly technology not only create a positive experience, they also establish trust and credibility in YPL as a professional public library.

Objective 1:

Be a model for customer service

- A. Develop new customer service standards that use a patron-first model with mutual trust, respect, and helpfulness as guiding values.
- B. Train existing staff on the new customer services standards and incorporate them into new employee orientation and staff evaluation.
- C. Improve internal communications and establish an Intranet so that staff can stay up-to-date.
- D. Design welcome brochure for new library cardholders highlighting new services and resources.
- E. Develop new ways to quickly serve patrons (eg. chat reference and text messaging).
- F. Improve back-of-house operations and technologies for quicker turnaround time on requests and inquiries.

Objective 2:

Foster digital access and inclusion through technology training and infrastructure

- A. Improve bandwidth, speed and reach of broadband at all YPL locations.
- B. Modernize YPL's fleet of public computers, printers and photocopiers. Deploy advanced workstations including iMacs with the Adobe Creative Suite of programs.
- C. Introduce self-check kiosks, wireless printing, and other services that empower the user and free staff for other tasks.
- D. Offer seamless online reservations for meeting room usage, museum passes, and other resources.
- E. Expand technology loan programs.
- F. Increase and improve technology instruction, classes and one-on-one assistance in all locations for all ages.
- G. Schedule updates to Riverfront's Tech Central and the Will Library Computer Lab to reflect best practices in makerspace and training lab design.

Objective 3:

Collections and digital resources that enrich and educate, are relevant and responsive, and easy to find and use

- A. YPL will make data-driven decisions about which collections and subscription digital resources to invest in with the goal of maximizing circulation and usage.
- B. Librarians will curate collections that reflect the languages, cultures, interests, and stories of the communities they serve.
- C. Staff will promote collections through attractive in-branch online book lists, staff recommendations, and reader advisories.
- D. Patrons will have better results browsing, discovering, and finding library books in pristine condition through rigorous collection development and weeding.
- E. YPL will invest in digital resources that meet patron needs and interests and promote them extensively through YPL.org and social media.
- F. YPL staff will resist censorship and calls for book banning.



Goal 3:

We're Your Partner for Life (YPL)

Developing programs and collections with an eye to remaining relevant in our patrons' lives at all stages of their personal and professional development through strategic partnerships throughout the City.

Objective 1:

Be a key player on team Yonkers

- A. Align YPL priorities with the City of Yonkers' key initiatives through partnerships and collaborations, hosting events and services, and distributing information.
- B. The library will foster civic engagement through hosting early voting, promoting voter registration, and facilitating public hearings and forums.
- C. YPL will make it easier for partnering organizations to utilize its auditoriums and meeting rooms for public programs, classes, and workshops.
- D. Empower all staff to forge partnerships with local organizations, serve on advisory boards, and collaborate on projects and programs.
- E. YPL will celebrate Yonkers through archiving its history and culture.

Objective 2:

Establish YPL as the center for Pre-K school readiness and the premier partner for K-12 schools and families

- A. Develop early literacy standards using First Five Years principles for programming that serves children, parents and care providers.
- B. Relaunch 1000 Books Before Kindergarten across all three locations as YPL's signature First Five Years program.
- C. Partner with pediatricians, daycare centers and Pre-K providers to promote library usage.
- D. Demonstrate that YPL's books, programs and playspaces for children as crucial tools for early childhood development and predictors of K-12 educational success.
- E. Improve collaboration and communication with Yonkers Public Schools to facilitate annual library card signup drives, more class visits, promotion of Summer Reading, and use of YPL resources for homework or research assignments.
- F. Develop closer relationships with local school administrators, teachers, and PTAs.

Objective 2: (continued)

- G. Highlight digital resources like tutor.com, Gale Courses, LinkedIn Learning, and Learning Express Library as educational tools.
- H. Expand partnerships like America Reads to increase homework help and tutor offerings afterschool and on weekends and track student progress.
- I. Aggregate all educational programs in targeted newsletters, social media feeds, and web portals so schools and educators can easily promote them.
- J. Designate a staff position to be liaison between YPL and schools to promote library resources, collaborate and schedule school/library visits.
- K. Adjust staffing so that children's and teen staff have time allocated to regular school interactions, specifically in targeted and underperforming schools.

Objective 3:

Support economic development in the city of Yonkers

- A. Expand job readiness classes and promote digital resources like LinkedIn Learning and Learning Express Library at YPL.
- B. Partner with local employers and workforce development organizations to host workshops, career fairs, recruitment events.
- C. Explore opportunity for workforce development agencies/organizations to have satellite services onsite at Riverfront Library.
- D. Provide local teens volunteer, part-time employment, and internship experiences that support future college and job readiness.
- E. Ensure that YPL reading rooms, meeting rooms, and facilities are productive coworking spaces for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and work-from-home employees.
- F. Assist small businesses through research tools, partnerships with BIDs, and relevant workshops.
- G. Train librarians to provide in-house job readiness skills such as resume assistance, interview techniques, job application assistance, and career exploration.

Objective 4:

Champion arts and culture in Yonkers

- A. Expand our public cultural programming to maximize use of the Riverfront Auditorium, Will Auditorium, and other performance and meeting room spaces.
- B. Engage and partner with local, emerging and established musicians, theater groups, and other performing artists to enhance our public offerings.
- C. Establish Riverfront Art Gallery as a premier exhibition space in Westchester County; continue to activate other library spaces for exhibiting artwork.
- D. Provide professional development and training opportunities for local and artists and musicians.
- E. Highlight Will Library's Fine Arts Collection as the most significant public collection of art books in the county.
- F. Buy and circulate more books from local authors and feature them in dedicated displays and collection areas. Host more authors for talks, lectures and writing workshops.
- G. Expand programs like Library Speakers Consortium that bring established authors to Yonkers residents through in-person and virtual programming.



Objective 5:

Connect vulnerable Yonkers residents with essential services

- A. Expand partnerships with organizations like Literacy Solutions to increase ESOL, citizenship classes, and legal services to New Americans.
- B. Improve communication with - and make referrals to - organizations offering case management, mental health, and housing services.
- C. Host organizations that assist with applications and enrollment for food, healthcare, and housing programs.
- D. Further develop partnerships with Yonkers Office for the Aging and related organizations to develop programs for older adult, including homebound seniors.
- E. Engage with the Yonkers Teen Bureau and similar organizations to provide onsite outreach to at-risk teens.
- F. Explore partnership with public health programs (ex: Einstein School of Medicine Residency Placement, Westhab) to offer onsite health-related assistance and referrals to individuals and families.



Goal 4:

Inspiring Staff, Inspiring Spaces, Inspiring Yonkers

Becoming a source of civic pride for Yonkers residents, who regard the library as an important reason why Yonkers is a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Objective 1:

Reinvest in library workers

- A. YPL will make active efforts to attract, recruit, and retain staff from the diverse communities it represents. The library will provide recurring training on issues relating to cultural competencies and diversity, equity and inclusion in order to make staff better co-workers and public servants.
- B. Standardize all basic training requirements that are system-wide and then specific to departments.
- C. Foster staff growth through mentorship, a professional development and training program, and peer-to-peer training.
- D. Revise job competencies and performance standards for staff and managers.
- E. Create a new employee orientation program that introduces YPL's customer service standards, sets performance expectations and provides a basic training schedule.
- F. YPL will empower all staff to take leadership roles in developing new programs, forging partnerships with individuals and organizations, and managing grants and projects.
- G. YPL will hire a human resources professional to lead staff recruitment, development, and retention.
- H. YPL will seek to develop an internal culture of collaboration and experimentation.
- I. YPL will pursue opportunities to grow and realign the staff with skills and experience that help them, or to provide professional training to help staff to grow and continue their careers.

Objective 2:

Plan and maintain beautiful and welcoming spaces

- A. Upgrade signage in all buildings to include intuitive and multilingual signage and wayfinding to navigate the spaces.
- B. Implement new policies to ensure all facilities issues are quickly acknowledged, explained, and addressed in a timely manner.
- C. Initiate and make substantial progress in fully renovating the Will Library interior.
- D. Create and initiate a five year plan for repairing and renovating Crestwood Library.
- E. Refresh furniture and meeting room spaces at Riverfront Library.
- F. Establish children's spaces that spark joy, curiosity, and a lifelong love of reading and libraries.
- G. Remodel teen areas at Riverfront Library and Will Library as safe spaces to study, socialize, and pursue wellness.
- H. Embed sustainability goals into all facilities projects.

Objective 3:

To enhance and achieve all of the above, cultivate new funding sources and advocacy strategies

- A. Work closely with the Foundation for the Yonkers Public Library (FYPL) to support its fundraising strategies.
- B. Hire a dedicated development professional to support YPL and the Foundation to develop and lead fundraising campaigns.
- C. Encourage all library staff to be entrepreneurial in pursuing and managing grants and other fundraising opportunities.
- D. Cultivate relationships with elected officials, corporations, foundations, and grantmakers that can support YPL programs and initiatives.
- E. Pursue revenue through space rentals, filming fees, and rebranded YPL merchandise.



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Grinton I. Will Library
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Crestwood Library
16 Thompson Street

www.ypl.org