



# Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Service

## *Strategic Plan 2026-2030*

Along the shore of Green Bay and bordering Michigan’s Upper Peninsula in Northeast Wisconsin, Marinette County boasts an abundance of picturesque places, recreational activities, and economic opportunities. The communities that make up the county are unique, each offering residents and visitors new places to explore and ways to connect.

Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Service (MCCPLS) is a network of local libraries situated in seven communities around the county. Together, the branches of MCCPLS offer critical access to resources and services, delivered in ways that fit well with our residents and visitors, and help tell the unique stories of their communities.



Coleman-Pound



Crivitz



Goodman



Marinette



Niagara



Peshtigo



Wausaukee

## **MCCPLS Strategic Planning Process**

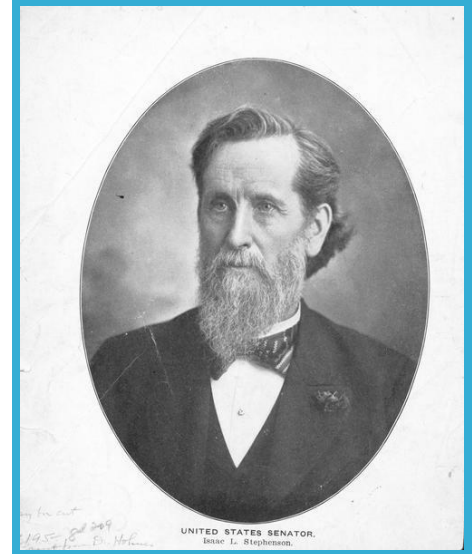
To ensure equitable access to information, tools, and services for all of Marinette County, the Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Service underwent a strategic planning process in 2025. The process was designed in collaboration with WiLS (Wisconsin Library Services) to understand the perspectives and priorities of communities across the county to ensure a five-year strategic plan that works well for all seven branches.

Our strategic planning process was people-powered, starting with the planning team. This group of five included representation from multiple branches, the library board, and the Friends of the Library. The planning team was charged with overseeing the process in collaboration with branch libraries to engage voices from all corners of the county.

The process developed with WiLS included three primary phases: Information Gathering, Plan Development, and Plan Activation & Assessment.

Information gathering for MCCPLS took place in the fall of 2025 and included the following activities:

The planning team responded to a **Planning Landscape Questionnaire** that asked about local and countywide opportunities and challenges, as well as the role they see for the library now and in the coming years.



*Isaac Stephenson (1829-1918)  
businessman, senator, and namesake of  
Marinette's Stephenson Public Library.*

*"Many individuals love their community library to obtain books/media that they love to read, watch and listen to. It's a place that is accessible and convenient to their location. Where children are encouraged to love reading through regular events like story time."*

- Questionnaire respondent

Library staff completed a **Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Questionnaire**. Designed as a SOAR strategic planning facilitation, the questionnaire asked staff to reflect on MCCPLS's current strengths, opportunities for the library, future aspirations, and the results they could expect to see.

*"It feels most urgent to work with the schools to provide additional resources to students and staff and a fun atmosphere to learn...outside of school."*

- Questionnaire respondent

Library stakeholders, including members of the library board, branch Friends groups, and members of the Library Foundation, responded to a **Library Stakeholders**

**Questionnaire** that asked them to consider local and countywide opportunities and priorities and the role of the library.

*[What are the three biggest opportunities for MCCPLS, broadly speaking?] "To serve the public without prejudice. To make sure that the public isn't geographically challenged to get to a library. To provide technical support to library patrons at all branches."*

- Questionnaire respondent

A **Community Survey** was shared broadly with all communities around Marinette County. Hundreds of community members weighed in through this survey, which posed questions about usage, awareness of, and satisfaction with existing library services, as well as priority focus areas for the library in the coming years.

The planning team developed a list of individuals to contact for **County Stakeholder Interviews**. The interviewees are connectors in their communities, often working for school districts or municipal governments. Interview questions related to their work and viewpoints on local priorities and the role of the library locally and in the county more broadly.

*The library can be an important partner in a local network supporting older adults and their caregivers in connection-making and community-building with services and events.  
(paraphrased)*

- Community Interviewee

A dashboard and instructional video were provided to the library for an **IMLS/DPI Annual Report Data Comparison**. Each year, libraries are asked to report data on library visits, circulation, and other statistics. The dashboard, provided by WiLS, offers libraries the tools to situate themselves within a comparison cohort of peer libraries (in this case, consolidated county libraries).

Questions designed to identify and articulate the library's **mission and vision** were woven throughout the information-gathering phase. Several drafts of a new vision statement and a refreshed mission statement were shared and then refined by the library.

## Notable Discoveries

After the data sets were compiled, the plan consultants assembled a data webinar for the planning team that included several data points and notable takeaways or themes that occurred across multiple data sets:



Our **countywide presence** is a strength that provides access to resources, services, and information that would otherwise be difficult for our most outlying communities to obtain.



Our **commitment to learning and literacy** is both a strength and an opportunity to build on through our collection, programs, and partnerships.



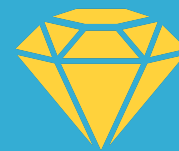
There is an opportunity to utilize coordinated approaches in certain circumstances for **efficiency and consistency** across the county (e.g., collection management, marketing, and planning and evaluation).



At the same time, many voices also express a desire for individual libraries to have **local flexibility** when possible, and to leverage our branches' local knowledge of the communities we serve.



Across the datasets, we see a need to **streamline internal and external communications** to improve community awareness of our services and enable our staff to work efficiently and with confidence.



A crucial component of any communication strategy is conveying **the library's local and countywide value** to decision-makers, including county and local elected officials.

# Foundational Statements

A library’s mission and vision statements are not only words on a page. They must be our north star, offering inspiration and guidance for our staff, board, Friends, and our library community. We are pleased to share a new vision and a refreshed mission statement, born from our strategic planning work.



## Our Vision

Inspiring curiosity, connection, and community in Marinette County.

## Our Mission

Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Service empowers, educates, and connects our community through access to resources, friendly service, and welcoming spaces for all.



Inspired by the themes and takeaways, the planning team developed and refined a strategic plan framework of future-facing goals and measurable objectives.

These goals and objectives will be embedded in our day-to-day work, sometimes through activities or projects, and sometimes by completing an objective. A sample set of activities is included in each goal area to illustrate *possible* activities or projects.

# Strategic Goals and Objectives

## Goal: Community Embeddedness

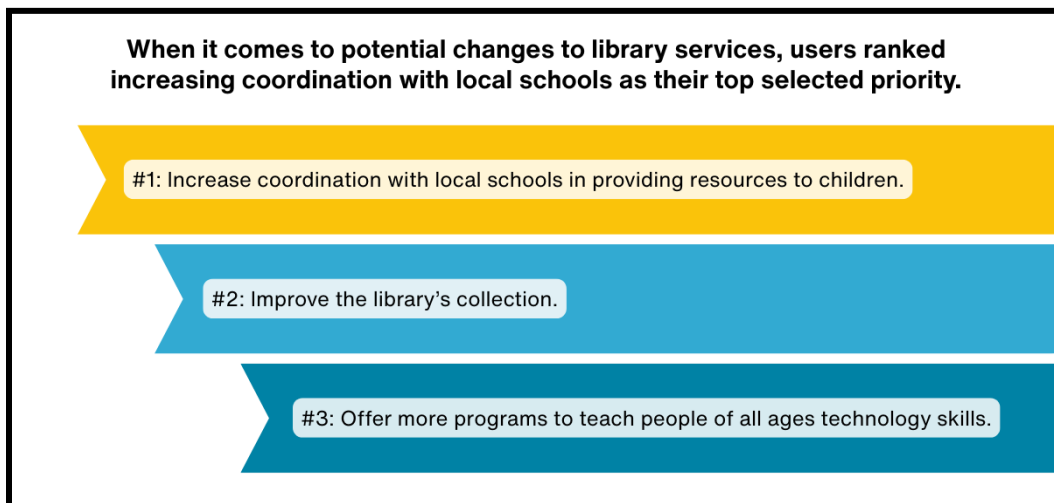
The branches of MCCPLS are anchor institutions in their communities through partnerships and support for lifelong literacy and learning.

### Measurable objectives

- 1 Continue to cultivate **literacy skills** with programs and partnerships that inspire a love of reading at any age.
- 2 Increase **connections with elected officials** at the local and county level to establish open communication, build trust, and advocate for equitable funding.
- 3 Increase and/or deepen **local partnerships** in communities throughout the county.

### Sample activities or projects

- Strengthen connections with local schools through library/media specialists.
- Invite elected officials to library events or activities.
- Invite elected officials to use library spaces for meetings and open houses to connect with local residents.
- Engage local businesses and organizations to find areas where the library branch and the partner can mutually benefit from working together.



*From the Community Survey. This chart reflects community preferences and not necessarily the library's goals.*

## Goal: County-Wide Access

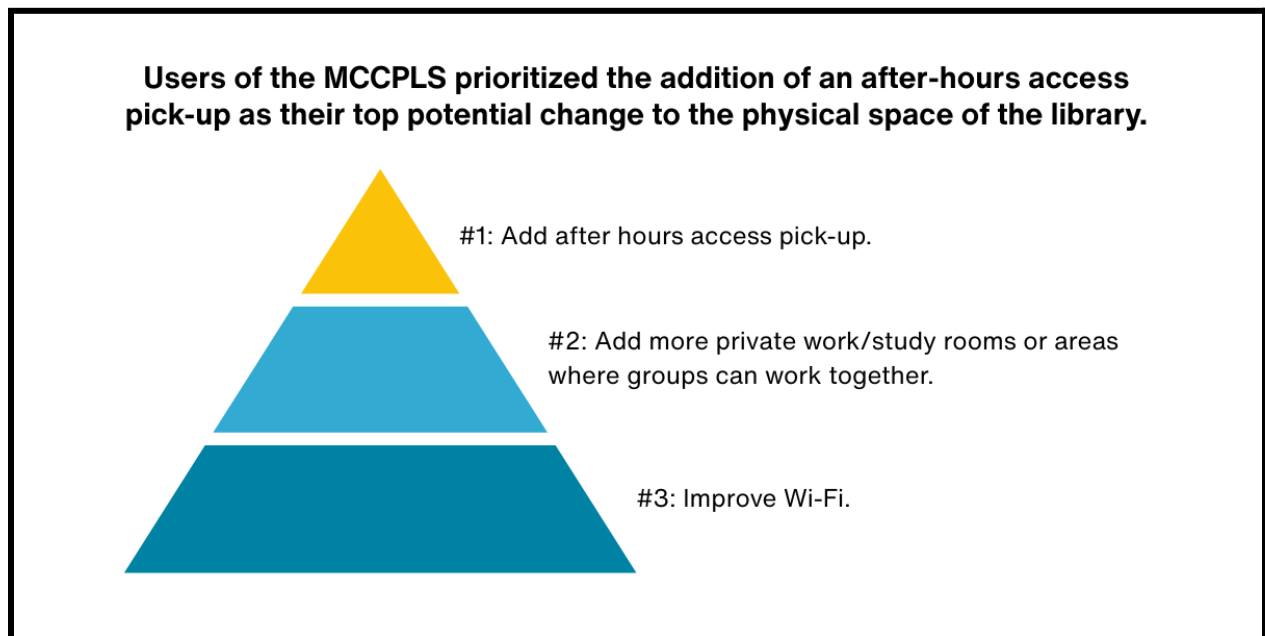
Through a network of library branches, all Marinette County residents can easily find and connect to information, tools, and skills to live and thrive.

### Measurable objectives

- 1 Offer **access to equipment, connectivity, and assistance** that enable community members to enhance their technology skills and connect with online and digital resources.
- 2 Improve **access to physical library materials** across Marinette County, particularly for people in rural areas and older adults.

### Sample activities or projects

- Provide regular technology training opportunities.
- Explore after-hours pickup options at some branches.



*From the Community Survey. This chart reflects community preferences and not necessarily the library's goals.*

## Goal: Marketing and Communications

The library branches that make up the MCCPLS are connected to each other and their communities through an intentional, predictable communication approach.

### Measurable objectives

- 1** Increase opportunities for library staff, Friends, and community members to **hear and share** what different branches are doing and offering.
- 2** Implement templates and talking points for all library branches to use, to **ensure consistent messaging** across Marinette County.
- 3** **Expand the MCCPLS user base** of cardholders and visitors through targeted messaging to groups who may not be aware of available resources.

### Sample activities or projects

- Host a series of listening sessions at different branches.
- Refresh and share a style guide that formalizes the voice of MCCPLS.
- Look at demographics and library traffic patterns to better align messaging and tools to the audience.

*[Are there things you wish the library did or had more of?] More effective centralized marketing; investing in the promotion of library events and services like space, study help aids, events; communicating with schools to promote library resources to families. (paraphrased)*

- Community Interviewee

## Goal: Hub and Spoke Model

In collaboration with library branch staff, MCCPLS takes a unified approach to critical aspects of its work, maximizing efficiency and consistency in service for all of Marinette County.

### Measurable objectives

- 1 Utilize a templated approach to facilitate **county-wide assessment** of certain services, spaces, and resources to understand what's working and where refinements might be needed.
- 2 Establish a **library-wide staff training** and professional development plan and calendar with easy-to-follow templates, clear learning outcomes, and expectations.

### Sample activities or projects

- Incorporate concise, clear steps for program evaluation directly into program planning checklists.
- Conduct technology audits and planning with each library branch.
- Work with individual staff members to identify existing strengths and their learning goals.
- Take advantage of existing tools like Niche Academy.

## Assessment & Communication

A key aspect of the strategic plan is an assessment approach that allows us to track and evaluate what's working or helping move the needle on the strategic goals and measurable objectives, without being overly burdensome for the library. Library staff partnered with WiLS' data analyst to learn about and craft a plan to activate and assess our progress on the strategic plan over the next five years. To ensure accountability to our community, we will implement a communication cadence to share various aspects of the plan and engage communities across the county through activities.

## Acknowledgements

Strategic planning would not have been possible without the time, energy, and ideas of many people around Marinette County. The library would like to thank the hundreds of people who took the community survey, completed questionnaires, and participated in interviews. Additionally, we appreciate the strategic planning team's thoughtful work in supporting the process and plan development.

Lastly, we thank the consulting team at WiLS for their project coordination and guidance.

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## Strategic Planning Team

- Vanja Anderson (Director, Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Service)
- Sara Foster (Retired, Niagara Branch Library)
- Paula Gruszynski (Board Member, Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Service)
- Lara Lakari (Children's Services Librarian, Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Service)
- Kathy McDonald (CALA Member, Coleman Branch Library)