



STRATEGIC PLAN

FISCAL YEARS 2025 -2030

PROGRESS Report May 2026

Introduction:

In 2023, MRL embarked on a new Strategic Planning process. First, a Strategic Planning Committee was formed, and feedback was gathered through a community survey and a series of eight public meetings, held at branches throughout our service area and online. Finally, an outside review of MRL operations was conducted. The six Strategic Priorities and Objectives below reflect that feedback and guidance, so that MRL can be even more effective in our service to our community.

This plan is meant to serve as a living document, and updates may be made as progress is made or unplanned obstacles arise. Though the goals and work within the Plan are prioritized, there are always work and projects within MRL's mission and operations that are ongoing, though not reflected within this document. We plan to regularly update this page with our progress so that you can keep up with all the activities we are completing to help serve you better.

Our mission:

Massanutten Regional Library is an engaged community partner providing programs and services that bring people together, foster creativity, and encourage lifelong learning.

Our vision:

To be the welcoming heart of our community where all come to learn, discover, create, and connect.

We value:

- Being a warm, welcoming, and safe space for community members to gather.

- Being actively engaged in the life of the community.
- Committing to robust outreach programming that serves underserved populations.
- Pursuing innovative partnerships that extend MRL resources.
- Employing a collaborative, creative, and enthusiastic staff committed to outstanding customer service and responsiveness.
- Ensuring ready, equal, and equitable access to a comprehensive and balanced collection of materials, programs, and technology.
- Protecting confidentiality of library patron records.
- Championing everyone's right to intellectual freedom.

Priorities:

Sustaining Our Mission

MRL will work to ensure that our mission, vision, and values are sustained far into the future through the effective management of funding. MRL will continue to strive to be the welcoming heart of our community where all come to learn, discover, create, and connect.

Supporting Children and Students

MRL will support young children and students with collections, programming, services, and outreach that supports school readiness and builds successful literacy skills from birth through young adulthood.

Reflecting Our Community

MRL will offer programs, collections, and services that reflect the diverse communities throughout our service area. MRL will promote and appreciate the heritage of everyone in our community and pursue services that promote equity and inclusion.

Providing Lifelong Learning

MRL will provide the resources people need to stimulate their imagination, explore their personal interests, and achieve their goals. MRL will support patrons with knowledgeable experts and information sources that answer questions and support lifelong learners.

Welcoming Spaces

MRL will adapt and maintain spaces to be responsive to community needs. These engaging spaces will provide a place to read, connect, relax, and learn. MRL will strive for spaces that are safe, inclusive, universally accessible, and aesthetically welcoming.

Ensuring Online Access

MRL will ensure equitable and free online access to our communities by providing wireless networks and wired computer workstations at all branch locations to bridge the digital divide. MRL will help its community access the resources and information needed for a safe and successful online experience.

Objectives:

Sustaining Our Mission

- 1) Develop and implement a five-year advancement plan, to grow donor relationships and identify additional fundraising and marketing opportunities.
- 2) Build relationships with localities and design a sustainable funding plan that better reflects the usage and positive impact that MRL has within the community.
- 3) Where possible, implement recommendations from MRL's Internal Library Operations Review especially with regard to personnel.
- 4) Maintain data-informed, responsible stewardship of resources by staff.
- 5) Attract, retain, and develop quality staff, MRL's most valuable resource.

Activities:

- 1) **FY 2025 and Ongoing: Encourage staff retention by improving wages and salaries relative to our peer public libraries through increases that outpace inflationary percentages.**
Progress: FY26, wage increase implemented; FY27 locality budget requests have been submitted.
- 2) **FY 2025: Implement procedures for all programming systemwide to be vetted by the Heads of Youth Services or Adult Services; if outside facilitators/partners are used, they will be credentialed in their field of expertise. Create a rubric to evaluate existing programming in order to ensure sustainability and effectiveness.**
Progress: Online programming proposal form implemented and used by all programmers. This new form allows vetting, multiple users at once, and notifies Heads of Youth Services, Adult Services, and our Marketing Specialist.
- 3) **FY2025: Engage in an advancement study, providing us with best practices and strategies to increase and improve fundraising.**
Progress: Advancement study, called "Development Assessment" has been completed with Cordelia Anderson Consulting, LLC. Deliverables were completed in December 2025 and presented to MRL Board in January 2026. Recommendations are already being planned and executed, including an annual "thank-you" event for leading donors.
- 4) **FY2026: Implement an agreement with our funding localities that will add clarity, is mutually beneficial to all parties, and includes a funding rubric. Increase local funding to fulfill the recommendation of our outside review.**
Progress: funding requests have increased above our funding mandate through 2027.
- 5) **FY2026: Add Branch Coordinator position to support six branch libraries.**
Progress: position is currently included in the draft budget for FY2027.
- 6) **FY2026: Create standards for retaining historical information and procedures across MRL to maintain institutional knowledge and encourage continuity of service during management transition.**
Progress: completed and ongoing; records retention and much needed destruction was completed in Spring 2026, in accordance with Library of Virginia retention rules and procedure. Additionally, we are annually updating our Procedures Index that covers duties of each position in Admin.
- 7) **FY2027: Implement memoranda of understanding with each of our auxiliary organizations, clarifying their roles and aligning each with MRL's mission, vision, and values.**

Progress: updated agreements are completed with the North River Friends of the Library, Village Friends of the library, Shenandoah library board, and the Towns of Broadway, Elkton, and Grottoes; Page Library Association agreement is in discussion.

- 8) **FY2028:** Research and pursue RFID technology for increased efficiency in circulating materials, conducting inventory, and cataloging. **The Director of Information Technology has obtained updated quotes on RFID technology and tags.**
- 9) **FY2029:** Increase funding for training and professional development to enable additional virtual and in-person opportunities for staff at all levels. **The Director and Human Resources have added funding for non-librarian staff to attend the Virginia Library Association Conference. We have also added Ryan Dowd's Homelessness Training suite to reinforce customer service to underserved patrons.**

Supporting Children and Students

- 1) Ensure a variety of free, quality programming for children and their caregivers throughout the MRL system.
- 2) Help Young Adult patrons feel a sense of belonging through free, quality programming, diverse collections, and engagement opportunities.
- 3) Collaborate with local educational institutions, homeschool families, and other organizations that support area youth.

Activities:

- 1) **FY2025:** Hire a Full-time Young Adult Specialist position, leading to an expansion of consistent ongoing teen programming.

Progress: completed on schedule. Expanded YA programming and outreach already occurring.

- 2) **FY 2025:** Enhance Prescription for Reading program by developing our own marketing collaterals to promote early literacy programming across our service area, while ensuring the sustainability of the program. Our goal is to reach at least 60% of 0-1 year olds within our service area.

Progress: updated collaterals containing bilingual bookmarks, brochures, and story time information are deployed; dedicated funding is deployed in future budgets, and grants will still be applied for this program.

- 3) **FY2026:** Establish a monthly Teen Advisory Group at Central Library within one year of hiring the Young Adult Specialist. **Progress: Completed. Teen Advisory Group has held its first meeting. Weekly teen programming has started at Central Library titled, "Weekly Whatever."**
- 4) **FY 2028:** Using the results of a space audit, along with focus groups of teens and/or Teen Advisory Group, explore options for designing a welcoming and engaging dedicated teen spaces and implementing changes in future years.

Reflecting Our Community

- 1) Provide operating hours that match the needs for library service within our communities.
- 2) Work with community partners to collaborate and develop programming that meets community needs.
- 3) Increase efforts to recruit staff who reflect the communities MRL serves.

- 4) Invest in inclusive materials, resources, and programming that reflect the full spectrum of languages, cultures, and communities in our service area.

Activities:

- 1) **FY 2025: Expand operating hours at all seven locations, with a goal of 270 service hours weekly systemwide.**
Progress: Our goal of 270 was met in January 2025; we have had excellent reports of usage at Elkton and significant Saturday morning use at Central, and we continue to see growth in visits in FY2026.
- 2) **FY2025 and ongoing: Improve our online catalog by adding languages as a searchable field and adding diacritics to item records to make foreign language titles more searchable and accessible.**
Progress: Technical Services has made excellent progress on language fields within the catalog, launching language filters June 2025; currently TS is focusing on language/captions in the DVD format.
- 3) **FY2026 and ongoing: Actively recruit for a diverse staff by focusing on at least one bilingual speaker at Central Library for our growing Spanish-speaking community. Work with our local ESL-learning partners such as Skyline Literacy and HCPS Family and Community Engagement during the recruitment process.**
We currently have staff in circulation that speak Spanish; since August 2025 that is daily, including Saturdays. With our new Adult Services Library Assistant, we also have regular Spanish coverage at our Information Desk as well. This has already led to an expansion of bilingual marketing and informational materials.
- 4) **FY 2026: Establish a Bilingual Story time series at the Central Library. In June 2025, Bilingual story time at Page Public Library had over 30 attendees.**
- 5) **FY2026: Conduct an annual Overdrive diversity audit, ensuring that MRL collections include 15% of titles from their Diverse Lists by FY2026 and 20% by the end of FY2028.**
Progress: comparing our diversity audits from FY2023 to FY2026, we have made positive progress in our goals for diverse e- and audio books, with increases in the percentages of a majority of Diverse Lists from Overdrive.
- 6) **FY 2027: Increase number of Spanish Language Adult titles to 2500. Increase titles in Youth Services collections of multiple languages, as well as adding audio/visual materials in a variety of languages.** **Progress:** current adult titles in Spanish as of June 2025 1230, not counting DVDs. Youth Services Spanish language items 1708 book titles, and Central Library created a global language collection in Youth Services.

Providing Lifelong Learning

- 1) Develop engaging programming that helps our community pursue their goals, build connections, and enrich their lives.
- 2) Bring MRL to our communities through innovative outreach programming and services.
- 3) Deliver online resource collections that reflect the interests of the community.

Activities:

- 1) **FY2025 and ongoing:** Engage in medium and large-scale literary events such as an annual Rocktown Author Festival and at least one Big Read program during the period of this Strategic Plan; this includes seeking grants, sponsorships, and committing programming funding to these community-wide events.
Progress: Big Read 2025 concluded successfully and we plan to do either another or do an in-house version in 2027 called the “Great Valley Read.” In 2025 Rocktown Author Festival was a success with an increased number of authors, a mural unveiling, and extended hours. In 2026, the RAF saw the addition of a keynote and the largest number of participants so far.
- 2) **FY2026:** Adult Services librarians will commit to providing greater branch support that includes programming assistance, online resources training, and collection development support, visiting each branch at least once per month.
Progress: AS librarians have established two new book clubs meeting in Luray for Page Public Library. Several projects to make the PPL genealogy/local history collection more accessible are underway. Online Resource identification and support sessions were held in our Spring 2026 Staff Development Day, and training will continue.
- 3) **FY2026 and Ongoing:** Make oral history projects such as the Vanishing Farms project and more accessible through digitization. **Progress:** An adult volunteer as well as work-study student have begun working on oral history research and transcription in September 2025. We have also re-launched MRL’s Century of Stories project, with new interviews coinciding with various branch anniversaries.
- 4) **Ongoing:** Grow and sustain arts programming, completing a minimum of six to twelve recurring programs per year.
Progress: Completed as our Initial goal was met with new monthly Bad Art Night, Crafternoon, and Library Learners programs in Harrisonburg, Notebooks and Crafting Together at North River Library in Bridgewater, Photography Club in Elkton, and Creative Space in Village Library. In addition, Teen Craft and Chat occurs monthly.
- 5) **Ongoing:** Relaunch project to digitize MRL’s visual Special Collections, prioritizing the sketches of Fred Cooper.
Progress: Scanning and transcription of the Fred Cooper sketches are complete; onto quality assurance phase. In addition, the digital publication of the Old Houses in Rockingham County was completed and celebrated with a reception for the community on May 1, 2026. MRL has also upgraded our digital storage systems to a permanent in-house solution.

Welcoming Spaces

- 1) Design safe, beautiful, functional, and inspiring library spaces; maintain and audit these spaces with many types of library users in mind according to our five-year facilities plan.
- 2) Ensure that our digital spaces are welcoming, user-friendly, and encourage patron engagement.

Activities

- **FY2025:** Conduct a space audit of our Central Library and North River Library to identify accessibility needs, signage, expansion and renovation possibilities. Space audits of other branches may occur in future years.

Progress: Space Study of Central and North River is complete. Updated, improved signage recommended from the audit has been completed at Central Library. New touchless automatic doors have been installed in 2025 at the Central Library for enhanced accessibility. Contract signed to remediate basement and convert a portion into usable office/conference space.

- **FY2026:** Determine the viability of centralizing our facilities maintenance and cleaning services as recommended in the Library Operations Review.

Progress: an RFP for Housekeeping Services was released, and a proposal was accepted. The new contract will begin July 1, 2026, and results in savings to MRL.

- **FY2026:** Provide prospective patrons with an online application option and digitally archive past registration forms.

Progress: purchased LibConnectPro engagement tool and implementation will come with an online application portion; our Marketing and information Technology teams have begun integration and training; proposed public launch Summer 2026.

- **FY2028:** Create and hire a Facilities Coordinator position to oversee maintenance, cleaning, and renovation systemwide.

Progress: MRL will not be able to place this in the budget for FY2027. However, with the addition of an Assistant Director position, significant project management skills will be added for future renovations and maintenance oversight for this period.

- **FY2028:** Engage a safety consultant to evaluate each of our locations.
- **Ongoing:** Implement maintenance improvements outlined in our Facilities Plan through FY 2030.

Progress: renovation of nursing room completed June 2025; Page Public Library renovation completed July 2025. Surplus furniture from GP room removed September 2025. Renovation of Central Library basement begun May 2026. Lighting for Central Library Large Print improved March 2026. New courier van budgeted for FY2027. Shenandoah Community Library accessible doors to be added FY2027.

Ensuring Online Access

- 1) Advance and implement our five-year technology plan, including modernization of our network infrastructure, software, and hardware.
- 2) Educate and inform our community about digital resources and internet safety.
- 3) Empower patrons to gain and grow the skills needed to accomplish their personal and career goals by providing and promoting relevant online resources.

Activities

- 1) **FY2025:** Re-evaluate patron computer usage and redistribute workstations if needed based on the results.

Progress: completed. Staff workstations and laptops have been replaced and now all run on supported Windows 11. Past staff stations will replace existing patron stations and schedules for future upgrade have been added to the technology plan.

- 2) **FY2026:** Enable wireless printing to improve the patron experience and to protect against cybersecurity threats.

Progress: CASSIE wireless printing is now in use at Central Library, and is in troubleshooting phase. This application will be rolled out to the branches in FY2027.

- 3) FY2026: Work with partners to seek grant funding to establish computer and digital literacy skills instruction designed for ESL learners that promotes digital equity.

Progress: Grant submitted to VA DHCD collaborating with Skyline Literacy; federal funding from grant rescinded. We have added self-paced digital literacy online resources to our collections.

- 4) FY2027: Install charging stations at each of our branches to support our patrons with wireless devices. Progress: completed in FY2026 by branch managers and Director of IT.

- 5) FY2027: Purchase a classroom set of laptops and use them to provide monthly computer literacy classes at Central Library. Progress: our fundraising goal was met for this project and purchases are scheduled for this equipment.

- 6) Ongoing: Increase distance of wireless coverage at our branches to include parking lots and/or pedestrian areas.

Progress: the first wave completed in 2025 with coverage increased at Central and multiple branches. A second wave in FY2027 will replace outdoor Wi-Fi access points at branches except Central and Elkton to increase range and speed, as well as renewing our firewall licenses and solving a dead zone at Central Library.

- 7) Ongoing: Increase Online Resource use through the creation and promotion of training videos for individual databases.

Progress: TBD;

Additional Activities Completed and Ongoing:

- LibConnectPro customer engagement application project is ongoing; intended to strengthen patron relationships, improve circulation, event attendance, and awareness of services/materials.
- Library Speakers' Consortium; the addition of this virtual program series allows patrons to attend online bestselling author talks both live and recorded for at least 30 days following.
- Additional online resources added during this period: Scholastic Teachables, ValueLine Investment Research.