

Warsaw Community Public Library 2026–2030 Strategic Plan



WARSAW
COMMUNITY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Approved by the Library Board on April 13, 2026

Table of Contents

Overview of the Planning Process	3
Assessment of Facilities, Services, Technology, and Operations	4
Ongoing Annual Evaluation Process	5
Financial Resources and Sustainability	5
Collaboration with Other Public Libraries and Community Partners	6
Mission, Vision, and Values	7
Priorities, Goals, Objectives, and Actions	8

Overview of the Planning Process

As of this plan's adoption, the Warsaw Community Public Library is still in the process of seeking approval from the library's fiscal authority for a renovation bond to cover critical, widespread infrastructure, accessibility, and safety issues. The last renovation for WCPL was completed in 1997. A bond would not only update aging equipment and address accessibility issues, but also enable the library to improve services and offerings by reconfiguring the building's limited layout. Given the delays over the past year and uncertainty around bond approval, along with changing legislation regarding public library funding in Indiana, the library hereby submits a strategic plan that addresses our current basic needs for the identified service priorities, with the understanding that bond approval or denial will determine what the library is able to address over the next few years.

As part of a 2024 Feasibility Study, WCPL worked with MKM Architecture and Design in various ways to gather feedback on current and future library services and offerings. Staff focus groups helped to identify internal departmental needs and trends. The library distributed a community survey to gauge the wants and needs of its service population. The survey was available in print at the library, via a QR code, and on the library's website. Over 400 respondents shared valuable information, including usage patterns, demographics, material preferences, collection knowledge, and requests for improvements and additions to the library. In October of 2024, MKM also facilitated three Community Stakeholder meetings with local leaders and one meeting with young adults to gather direct information through dialogue.

WCPL's Staff Development Day in September 2025 was facilitated by library consultant Michelle Bradley. She led staff through activities aligned with creating a strategic plan to identify and address staff insights, values, and goals, while also assessing and addressing perceived community aspirations and needs.

Assessment of Facilities, Services, Technology, and Operations

Facilities: The facility located in Warsaw, Indiana, was last expanded in 1998 from 14,000 square feet to 41,000 square feet to improve accessibility to upper-level reading rooms, book collections, and computer stations. Library space includes public meeting rooms, study rooms, and work areas.

The library conducted a Feasibility Study with MKM Architecture and Design in 2024. The comprehensive strategy recommended from the study was that *"In addition to a full building system replacement, comprehensively reorganize and renovate the existing building to address the entirety of the facility needs within a singular project – accommodating failing infrastructure **AND** operational inefficiency simultaneously."* Based on the Feasibility Study findings, it was clear that the amount of work needed to address infrastructure, accessibility, and safety would require a bond. The library began work with Ice Miller as bond counsel and with Baker Tilly as bond advisors after the completion of the study.

Services: The library has expanded services to include Experience Passes to help break down barriers to patrons' access to educational, cultural, and social opportunities. The passes include free entry to Indiana state parks, museums, zoos, and cultural institutions. Additionally, the library partnered with five local organizations to create an outdoor StoryWalk experience on the Beyer Farm Trail at Pike Lake. The library continues to offer programs and events both in-house and externally in partnership with various community organizations.

Technology & Computer Rotation: The library meets or exceeds Indiana public library standards for technology and public access. Various databases and public access services are offered (e.g., Internet, wireless inside and out into our parking lot). The library will keep library hardware and software on a *five year rotation*. This will not only ensure that we maximize our investment, but will also keep us aligned with emerging technology. The library will continue to explore virtual and AI technology as well. By doing so, we can fulfill our commitment to community access and engagement.

Operations: WCPL maintains, evaluates, and updates general operating, personnel, and administrative policies to ensure smooth library operations.

Ongoing Annual Evaluation Process

The Board of Trustees, Library Administration, and staff will review the goals, objectives and activities outlined in this Strategic Plan and will strive to implement future activities and initiatives in line with the plan.

An online copy of the Strategic Plan is available for the staff and the public. Additionally, the library posts the previous year's statistical highlights on the library's website.

Formal and informal evaluations are an ongoing part of assessing library programs, collections, and services.

Financial Resources and Sustainability

Senate Enrolled Act 1 has created uncertainty for public libraries in Indiana. Part of the bill addresses the recalculation and allocation of LIT (Local Income Tax), which is the second-largest source of revenue for WCPL. This will significantly impact the library's budget if and when it is implemented.

House Bill 1406 added another layer of fiscal uncertainty by limiting annual budget growth for public libraries. Public libraries will only be allowed to receive 49% or less of the MLGQ (Maximum Levy Growth Quotient) or face binding review. Guardrails to protect public libraries from having their budgets reduced by more than 10% in a binding review were also removed in the bill.

The library's Rainy Day Fund would cover only one of many potential emergency needs (e.g., replacement of the dry sprinkler system). Securing bond approval is critical for WCPL due to the amount of aging and failing infrastructure and safety needs.

Collaboration with Other Public Libraries and Community Partners

Other Public Libraries:

The Warsaw Community Public Library is active in Libraries Serving Communities (LSC), a consortium made up of directors from 18 public libraries in Northeast Indiana. Information, knowledge, resources and training opportunities are shared to mutually benefit all member libraries.

The library is an institutional member of the Indiana Library Federation, the American Library Association, and belongs to the Public Library Association subdivision.

Community Partners:

The Warsaw Community Public Library is a vital institution in our community. For over 100 years, the library has served the community as a valuable resource, serving learners of all ages in their ongoing development of interests, wants, needs, and skills. The library exists as a "Third Place" where people can freely gather to discover, learn, and connect.

The library has expanded its partnerships to include numerous local organizations, creating new engagement opportunities. A permanent example of this is StoryWalk, an outdoor extension of the library that celebrates literacy, nature, family, and movement. Unique experiences, such as hosting the ALA and USHMM traveling national exhibit Americans and the Holocaust, have created opportunities to partner with local and regional businesses and organizations in new ways. The library is actively working to establish a regular presence at community events such as Fat & Skinny Tire Fest and Spooktacular. Both events are large-scale downtown celebrations.

Warsaw Community Public Library

Strategic Plan 2026–2030

MISSION

- To provide cultural, informational, and recreational services for all.
- To build a basic collection of print and non-print materials with access to lesser used materials through library networks.
- To provide services, that promote lifelong education, communication of ideas, enlightened citizenship and enrichment of personal lives.

VISION

WCPL engages and equips our community by providing inclusive, innovative and relevant services without barriers.

VALUES

Welcoming

We provide a space where patrons can feel supported and accepted.

Inclusive

We offer a wide variety of collections, programs and services that contribute to the success of all members of our community.

Accessible

We seek convenient ways to make our collections, programs and services available to patrons in a variety of formats.

Knowledgeable

We are dedicated to providing timely and accurate information that informs and empowers our patrons.

Enthusiastic

We are passionate about our work and helping patrons discover all that the library has to offer.

Adaptable

We strive to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of our patrons and our community.

Forward Thinking

We continually pursue new and better ways to serve our community.

PRIORITY #1 – ACCESS

Goal 1: WCPL is easily accessible for all visitors.

Objective: Reconfigure the main entrance to improve accessibility and enhance intuitive navigation.

Actions:

- Redesign the main entry to include an accessibility ramp. (2026)
- Redesign the main entry to allow visitors to enter on the upper level. (2026)
- Repair and reconfigure the parking lot to address accessibility and safety concerns. (2026)

Goal 2: WCPL provides flexible space to accommodate changing community needs.

Objective: Reimagine the interior of the building to increase flexibility and adaptability to change.

Actions:

- Redesign the upper and lower levels to include more open, flexible space. (2026)
- Design meeting rooms to support a wider range of in-house and community events. (2026)
- Design multi-use private spaces for individuals and small groups. (2026)
- Design an expanded Youth Services area. (2026)

Goal 3: WCPL offers enhanced outdoor spaces for learning, leisure, and connection.

Objective: Create outdoor opportunities that support community interaction, learning, and enjoyment.

Actions:

- Establish outdoor seating areas for patrons and staff. (2028)
- Incorporate interactive outdoor art to support learning and joy. (2028)
- Utilize green space for programs, gatherings, and community connection. (2028)
- Grow and showcase native plants with educational signage. (2028)

PRIORITY #2 – PEOPLE

Goal 1: WCPL community members view the library as “our place.”

Objective 1: Expand materials and services to reflect local populations, demographics, and needs.

Actions:

- Provide sensory-assisting materials for all ages. (2026)
- Offer materials in commonly spoken languages in our service area. (2027)
- Assess the need for American Sign Language staff education and/or materials. (2027)
- Increase digital services to support community health and wellness. (2027)

Objective 2: Foster a supportive and engaging community environment.

Actions:

- Design passive engagement and lounge seating throughout the library. (2026)
- Provide dedicated spaces for individuals and small groups. (2026)
- Create rotating monthly educational displays highlighting cultural, educational, and recreational interests. (2027)

Goal 2: WCPL staff value professional development and thrive in a supportive workplace.

Objective: Build a culture of continuous learning, growth, and collaboration.

Actions:

- Implement onboarding practices that reflect WCPL values. (2028)
- Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities. (Ongoing)
- Create opportunities for cross-department collaboration and learning. (Ongoing)
- Provide regular staff training on library and local resources. (Ongoing)
- Provide regular staff training on basic library security and safety procedures. (Ongoing)

PRIORITY #3 – CONNECTION

Goal 1: Foster greater community engagement.

Objective: Offer a diverse array of programs and events that reflect community interests.

Actions:

- Host educational events highlighting cultural and recreational interests. (2027)
- Expand STEAM programming. (2027)
- Explore opportunities to host traveling exhibits. (2029)

Goal 2: Improve communication with the community.

Objective 1: Increase communications efforts to share library offerings and information.

Actions:

- Create and distribute a quarterly WCPL digital newsletter. (2027)
- Establish a marketing email list of patrons and community partners. (2027)
- Send monthly emails highlighting upcoming events, services, and resources. (2027)
- Advertise programs through local news outlets (radio, newspaper, online). (2026)
- Utilize community partners for large event promotion (KCVB, Chamber, etc.). (2026)

Objective 2: Strengthen community-facing outreach and visibility.

Actions:

- Create monthly Community Profiles for social media. (2027)
- Attend downtown community events as WCPL (Fat & Skinny Tire Fest, Spooktacular). (2026)
- Recognize Winter and Summer Reading sponsors through social media, local media, outdoor signage, and in-library banners/posters. (2026)