



Heights Libraries

Cleveland Heights-University Heights

*Here for you, Wherever you are!*

# **Strategic Plan**

**FY2023-2025**

**Approved by the Board of Trustees on**

**July 18, 2022**



## Our Mission

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Cleveland Heights – University Heights Libraries fulfill community needs by providing free access for ALL to:

- Safe, welcoming spaces and digital environment
- Expert information and research assistance
- Current and balanced materials
- Outstanding services, programs, and classes

## Our Vision

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The Cleveland Heights - University Heights Libraries are the progressive and adaptive center of the community, connecting people to each other, their neighborhoods, and the world.

## Our Values

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We place great value in:

- *Service for ALL*  
Lead with a culture of acceptance, diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect for ALL. Ensure that our libraries remain free and accessible. Champion digital and print literacy, intellectual freedom, and privacy. Respond to the needs and wants of our customers.
- *Supporting Community Aspirations*  
Cultivate and support programs that encourage safe and thriving neighborhoods. Foster a climate of innovation inside and outside our walls.

- *Responsible Stewardship*  
Practice management that incorporates integrity, diversity, and fiscal responsibility. Share organizational decision making and communicate effectively internally and externally.

## **Our Tagline**

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Opening Doors, Opening Minds

## **Our Future: Strategic Focus Areas**

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- Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Ensure an environment of safety, security, and well-being for community members
- Champion community workforce and tech skill development
- Promote unbiased sources of information and combat censorship and disinformation

## **Introduction**

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The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Libraries have consistently utilized the process of strategic planning to set goals, measure progress, and move into the future with strength and relevancy. The FY2020-2022 plan was characterized by a focus on making the library safe, secure, and accessible for all members of the community along with an interest in enhanced workforce development strategies. The successful implementation of the FY2020-2022 plan presents the library with the opportunity to continue building on its previous initiatives while also adding a new emphasis on combating censorship and disinformation.

The strategic plan is organized around four overarching strategic focus areas, each supported by strategic objectives and goals. The plan serves as a template for decision-making and the effective allocation of resources. Most importantly, the FY2023-2025 strategic plan clearly adheres to the Library’s mission and supports its vision to be the “...progressive and adaptive center of the community...”

## **The Process**

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Libraries entered into a new strategic planning process in January 2022.

Information was acquired from a community survey (287 participants), distributed online and in print, and from a community stakeholders Focus Group held on February 9, 2022 with 10 attendees representing community stakeholder organizations. The information acquired from the survey and the Focus Group was shared with the Board of Trustees and the library's management team. Feedback from the survey indicated positive community feelings about the library with respondents frequently expressing their feeling that the excellent library staff was one of the library's strengths along with services including hotspots, free printing, lunches for children, and community involvement. There was also mention of the need to provide greater diversity in programming, better access for those with disabilities, the need to address an aging infrastructure, and continuing efforts to serve those that are underserved or unserved.

The Board of Trustees met on March 14, 2022 for a four hour retreat to review the mission, vision, and values of the library. A decision was made to revise the statements and the definitions for the values. The Board then discussed continuing to focus on the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion focus area in line with the 2021-2024 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Plan. Further conversation resulted in a decision to modify two of the previous focus areas in order to continue the important work around workforce development and a safe, secure, and accessible environment. A new fourth area of strategic focus was created related to combating censorship and misinformation.

The Administrative Support Team then met on April 14, 2022 for a four hour retreat to consider the strategic focus areas through five library-specific perspectives (Community, Staff, Internal Processes, Financial, and Non-Financial Resources), thus resulting in objectives under each focus area. The information from that retreat was compiled and used to create the goals required to implement the plan.

The themes from the surveys are carried throughout the plan and are supported by objectives and goals which will positively impact the lives of those in the community.

## Planning Team

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### *Board of Trustees*

Gabe Crenshaw, *President*  
Max Gerboc, *Vice President*  
Vikas Turakhia, *Secretary*  
Dana Fluellen  
Annette Iwamoto  
Patti Carlyle  
Tyler McTigue

### *Administration Support Team*

Nancy Levin, *Director*  
Kim DeNero-Ackroyd, *Deputy Director*  
Debbie Herrmann, *Fiscal Officer*

Sheryl Banks, *Communications Manager*  
Tiffani Carter, *Adult Services Manager*  
Chuck Collins, *Collection Services Manager*  
Constance Dickerson, *Noble Branch Manager*  
Kevin Echols, *Safety Services Manager*  
Ty Emerson, *Circulation Services Manager*  
Matt Hoffman, *IT Manager*  
Heather Howler, *Continuing Education Manager*  
Maggie Kinney, *Coventry Branch Manager*  
Sam Lapides, *Youth Services Manager*  
Laurie Marotta, *Human Resources Manager*  
Sara Phillips, *University Heights Branch Manager*



Strategic Planning Facilitator: Northeast Ohio Regional Library System

# Strategic Focus Area 1

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## Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion

*Outcome:* Community members and staff are valued, respected, and welcomed for their individual assets and differences and are able to achieve their fullest potential.

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### Objectives and Goals:

1. Maintain alignment of board, leadership, and staff efforts to achieve goals and objectives outlined in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Plan 2021-2024.
2. Renew diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and objectives for 2025.
  - Respond to needs and wants of the community by incorporating current community knowledge in addition to seeking regular input
  - Cultivate diverse collections, classes, programs, and services
  - Enhance and expand outreach to underserved and unserved communities
  - Allocate resources (people, time, space, and finances) to better develop services to underserved and unserved communities
  - Find relevant community groups and organizations with whom to partner around DEI initiatives
  - Support DEI training for staff
  - Identify and implement ways in which to eliminate barriers to service
3. Collaborate with our three joint committee partners to recognize opportunities to promote diversity, equity and inclusion; and, subsequently, act to advance those opportunities within our four governmental organizations and throughout our community.
  - Joint Committee Partners: CH-UH Superintendent and Board of Education; City of Cleveland Heights Mayor and City Council; and City of University Heights Mayor and City Council.

## Strategic Focus Area 2

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### **Ensure an environment of safety, security, and well-being for community members**

*Outcome:* Community members view the Library and its branches as well maintained, providing a physical and emotional sense of safety and security and Library staff are able to handle emergency situations in a knowledgeable and confident manner. The Library partners with organizations in order to build and enhance community well-being. Wellness collaborations provide increased programming and service opportunities in new areas and innovative modes of delivery. Internal processes are reviewed continuously in order to remain relevant for current needs associated with safety, security, and well-being, and for emerging trends.

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#### **Objectives and Goals:**

1. Bolster safety and security infrastructure and practices.
  - Provide continuous safety and security training for staff
2. Cultivate a new mindset for wellness collaborations.
  - Expand lending collections that contribute to health and well-being (for example, playground equipment)
  - Investigate ways to help address food insecurity in the community
  - Increase the number of programs on topics focused on health and well-being
3. Create a system for continuous review and revision of relevant policies and procedures.
  - Conduct facility audits regularly in the areas of accessibility, cleanliness, environmental hazards, safety, security, and sustainability

## Strategic Focus Area 3

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### Champion community workforce and tech skill development

*Outcome:* The Library staff is able to offer a multi-faceted approach to workforce development beginning with career education at the secondary school level and continuing through retirement. Library staff are trained to accommodate and respond to a wide range of technology skill development needs. The Library actively partners with educational and business organizations to offer an array of expert services.

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#### Objectives and Goals:

1. Centralize and brand career services to increase accessibility.
  - Investigate the viability of an on-site career center
  - Research how to launch an on-demand site that would allow customers access outside of our walls
2. Identify and respond to community workforce needs.
  - Survey businesses on how the library can help them with preparing potential employees for the workplace
  - Train staff in order to be prepared to fully assist job seekers with all facets of a job search
  - Target workforce development partners
  - Investigate how to provide life skills programs or services
3. Strengthen capacity to provide technology services.
  - Evaluate relevancy and age of current technology and equipment in order to determine what improvements and updates need to be made
  - Assess existing technology classes, programs, and services so that job seekers are receiving current information
  - Organize a technology petting zoo
  - Revive technology outreach to the branches and local community organizations
  - Train staff in new and existing technology



## Strategic Focus Area 4

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### **Promote unbiased sources of information and combat censorship and disinformation**

*Outcome:* Community members are able to rely on the Library to provide unbiased sources of information, protect intellectual freedom, and combat censorship. Community members and staff benefit from ongoing information literacy education and the board is a known advocate at the local, state, and national levels for intellectual freedom and the opposition of censorship.

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#### **Objectives and Goals:**

1. Ensure availability of unbiased materials and the representation of authentic voices.
  - Provide balanced collections, including more diverse titles and authors
  - Create and implement a rubric for vetting programs and speakers to ensure balance and ascertain expert information
  - Continuously review links on the Library website to ascertain currency and reputability
2. Grow staff awareness of content censorship and misinformation.
  - Share intellectual freedom news with staff on a regular basis
  - Train staff on topics including Ohio Reference Excellence, intellectual freedom, media bias, and how to respond to challenges to materials
3. Expand information literacy and community awareness.
  - Celebrate Banned Books Week
  - Host open forums and educational opportunities on information literacy, censorship issues, and how to find reputable sources
  - Increase board advocacy at the local, state, and national level on issues of intellectual freedom and censorship