



**BUILD CONNECTIONS
ENRICH LIVES**

Germantown Community Library **STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027**



**Building connections, enriching lives
& growing our community.**

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MISSION

The Germantown Community Library is a cornerstone of our community that provides services, ideas, and resources that enrich lives, build connections, and grow the community.

The GCL lives this mission by

- Connecting people with information and resources they need to thrive.
- Providing a welcoming environment and positive experience for everyone.
- Cultivating learning at any age.
- Offering opportunities for entertainment and leisure.

"The Germantown library is one of the "hidden" gems in our community. I have found it to be useful in every facet of my life! We are so fortunate to have a wonderful library with so many services to offer in our community."

-Community Survey Participant



WELCOME TO YOUR LIBRARY!

Germantown Community Library Background

When the first Germantown Community Library was built in 1962, it served a population of just under 700 people and was open twenty hours a week. Fast paced growth in the next two decades led to the construction in 1982 of a new building that was five times larger. The appeal of Germantown's location, its thriving economy, and village services continued to attract new residents. By 2000, Germantown's population had grown past 18,000 and the library had outgrown its space. With an eye on future growth, the village approved a 26,000 square foot building that can be expanded by 13,000 square feet through an addition of a second floor mezzanine level. In 2002, the current building opened its doors and welcomed patrons.

The Village's foresight will almost certainly benefit community members in the coming years. Germantown continues to grow. As of 2022, the Germantown Community Library serves nearly 21,000 residents and an extended county population of 34,539 that includes the non-librariated communities of Richfield and Jackson. Richfield makes up 32% of the total service population and Jackson, 10%. Unsurprisingly, as the population has grown, so have the needs of community members for the Germantown Community Library. Collections, public spaces, technology, and programs have all flourished over the last several years.

Like many libraries, Germantown Community Library faces challenges, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting disruptions. The library has many opportunities to serve the Village of Germantown and surrounding communities, but an increase in library space and/or the modification of existing spaces is crucial to meeting those needs. Germantown is growing and there is also an increase in the diversity of residents in and around the Village. This offers opportunities for the library to grow its user base and impact in the community, but also presents a real challenge as the needs of the different groups are varied. The library, as an employer, has been impacted by external events. COVID-19, staff shortages, and competing funding priorities are all challenges that the library faces, at least in the short term. However, through this strategic plan and with community guidance, the library will develop strategies to successfully meet these challenges and continue to thrive alongside the community it serves.

As the library's statistics show and as the community knows, the Germantown Community Library is ready to embrace the challenges before them. This was especially apparent in the last two years, as the library provided key services through commitment and innovative thinking during closures and public health concerns related to COVID-19. Faced with great challenges, the library thrived and worked to help others do the same, in ways big and small. With these experiences, a remarkable staff, and strong community support, the Germantown Community Library is well positioned to successfully achieve its strategic goals.

It's a wonderful library - great place to study, learn, read, hang out - and all the staff are so friendly and helpful, they're terrific. The library is a real treasure!"

-2022 Community Survey Response

STRATEGIC GOALS

The following goals and objectives were determined after a thorough process of data and information gathering and analysis. They are rooted in community and library needs, articulated in survey results, community conversation findings, staff input, and quantitative data such as demographics and library statistics.

Goal 1: Growing Services

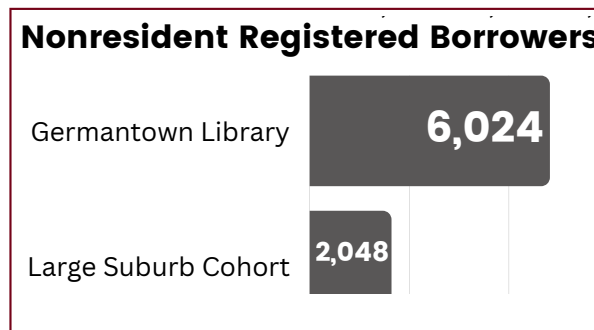
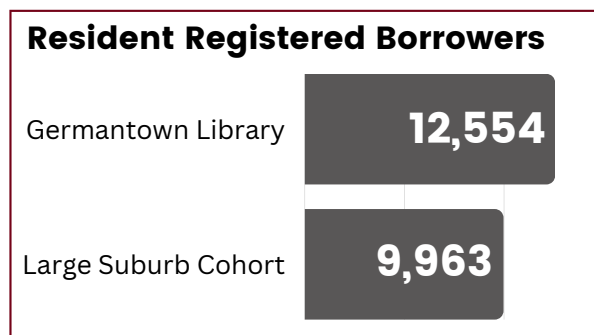
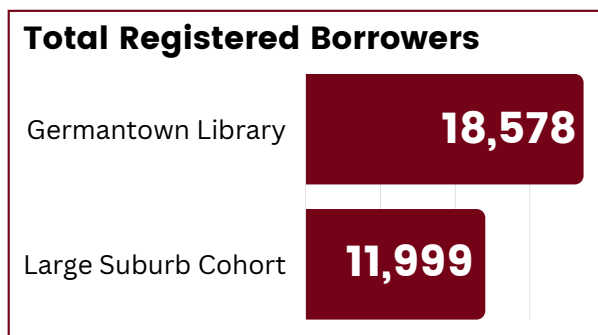
Collection care and customer service are fundamental to the library's success. Cultivating the collection and providing excellent service will increase accessibility to and use of the Germantown Community Library.

Objectives

- Develop and maintain collection management policies and procedures for materials and resources, both physical and digital, which reflect the needs and interests of the community.
- Strengthen and maintain a positive patron experience through programming and services that are responsive and appealing to the community we serve.

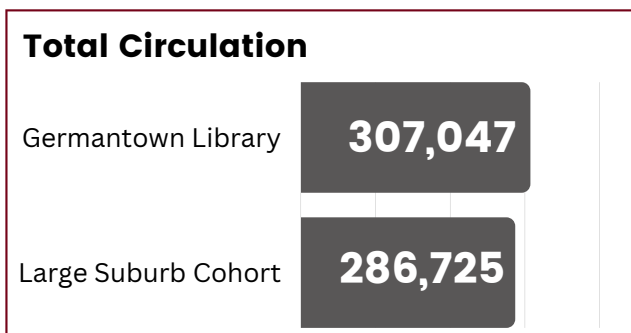
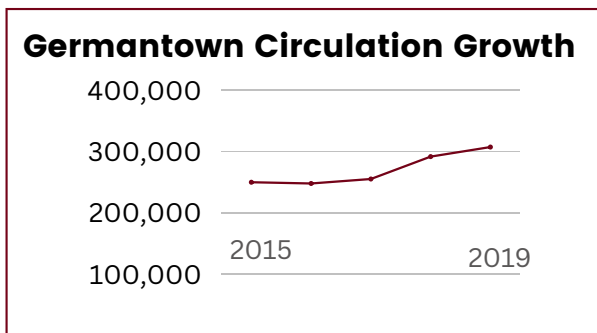
The Germantown Community Library is more than a physical space. It provides critical services to the community and as their needs grow and change, the library should be positioned to respond through quality collections, programming, and staff expertise. In times that have been challenging for most public libraries, the Germantown Community Library has thrived, as the following 2019 statistics clearly illustrate.

Registered Borrowers

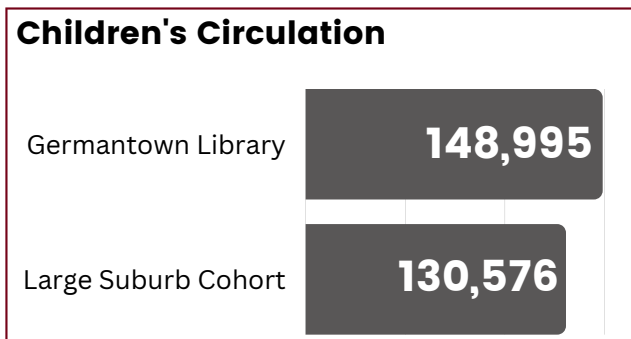


GCL had a higher number of resident and non-resident cardholders than comparable libraries. (Data source: WiLS Annual Report Statistics 2019)

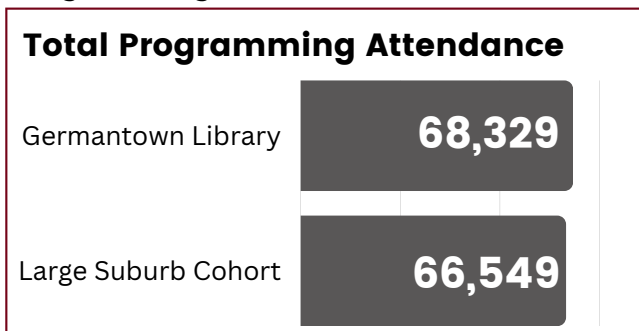
Circulation



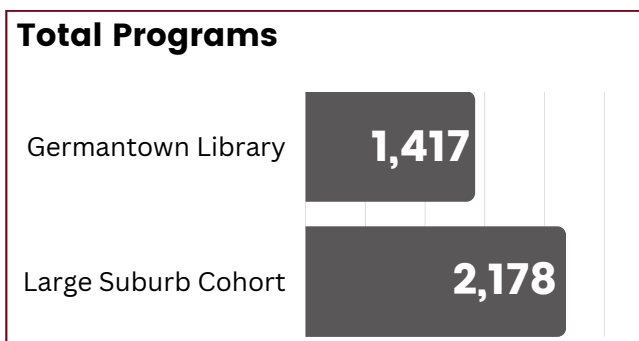
GLC outpaced peer library circulation, driven in particular by children's circulation. (Data source: WiLS Annual Report Statistics 2015-2019)



Programming



GCL offered fewer programs than peer libraries, but saw higher attendance numbers. (Data source for both charts: WiLS Annual Report Statistics)



A strategic plan is future facing, but rests upon the existing strengths of any organization. In order to maintain excellent services and a high quality collection, the library will continue to prioritize the fundamentals: collections, cardholders, and programming. This is directly in response to community needs and expectations of the Germantown Community Library. As one community conversation attendee put it, "How-to's, learning, education – it's at the library. Get it all at the library."

Goal 2: Growing Spaces

Flexible, multi-purpose spaces and a presence in and around the community means Germantown Community Library meets people where they are, and appeals to a wide variety of audiences and their needs.

Objectives

- Develop pathways for expansion of the library's footprint
- Improve visitor and staff satisfaction within the physical library space

The Germantown Community Library has successfully met community needs through collection development, outreach and partnership building, and programming. However, the population of Germantown and the surrounding, non-librariated communities continues to grow, resulting in more, and also varied, demands on the library's spaces and services. Although the library's building is comparable in size to its cohorts, it has a larger patron base and participation rate, reinforcing both the need and community support for library services and spaces. It can be difficult for any library to balance the space needs for all patrons. As the Germantown Community Library has, in the last decade, added programming, early literacy activities in the children's space, and creative spaces, it has become busier and more lively. This has resulted in the need for quiet spaces where patrons can read, study, and explore without interruption.

"My usage of the library has changed as my kids have grown up. Now I appreciate quiet space for adults and books easily visible that catch my interest, but before I most appreciated a place for kids to read, listen, and tinker/play. I'm amazed with all the library has been putting out there lately--so many activities. I hope you have lots of folks taking advantage of and enjoying all the library has been offering."

-2022 Community Survey Response

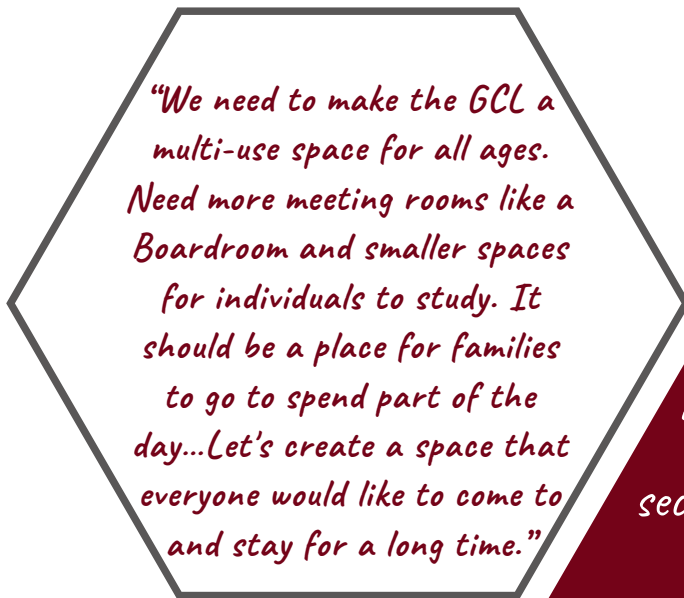


Data and information gathered in the planning process points toward support and need for building expansion. Survey respondents' top priority for improving the physical space of the library was the creation of a designated quiet space to read and work, something not possible with the current building's footprint.

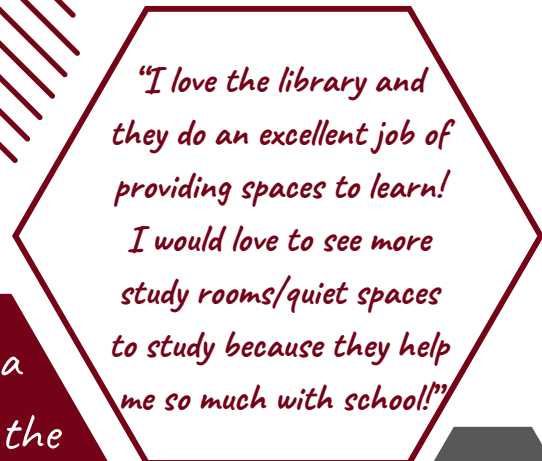
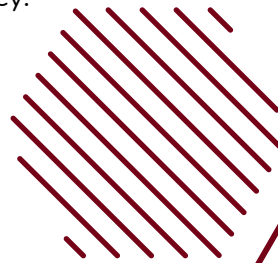
Based on a Survey Scale of 1-5 (1=lowest, 5=highest)

Building Expansion Priorities	Weighted Score
#1 - Create a designated quiet space to read, work or study.	4.23
#2 - Create a Makerspace area.	3.95
#3 - Create more interactive activities in the Children's Area.	3.65
#4 - Create more collaborative spaces and group study rooms.	3.26
#5 - Create a space for teens.	3.07
#6 - Provide options for pick up of material.	3.05

Community conversations and the survey clearly indicated community support for library expansion. Here are just a few statements shared via the community survey:



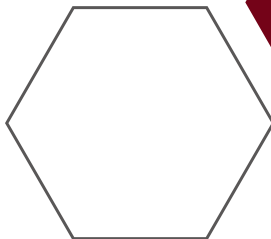
"We need to make the GCL a multi-use space for all ages. Need more meeting rooms like a Boardroom and smaller spaces for individuals to study. It should be a place for families to go to spend part of the day...Let's create a space that everyone would like to come to and stay for a long time."



"I love the library and they do an excellent job of providing spaces to learn! I would love to see more study rooms/quiet spaces to study because they help me so much with school!"



"I would love to see a second floor added to the library to create a separate children's space. Both adults and children would benefit from different usage areas."



Of course, some improvements to the existing space can also be made through careful study and intentional updates.

Goal 3: Growing Collaborations & Community

Through careful practices and meaningful community relationships and partnerships, the Germantown Community Library will bring people and groups together to learn, accomplish goals, and build connections.

Objectives

- Improve, document, and share internal processes and practices to identify, define, and evaluate relationships and partnerships.
- Expand and strengthen connections and partnerships among existing and new community networks, especially those that help members of the Germantown area and surrounding communities to learn, build relationships, and connect with each other.
- Expand outreach services of material and programming outside of the library building to residents in Germantown, Richfield and Jackson.

Throughout the planning process, the library heard from staff, trustees, and community members that the Germantown area and surrounding communities have a plethora of service organizations, government and civic agencies, and community groups to serve the varied needs of residents. While there are strong services and partnerships, community conversation participants shared that there is room for better coordination to improve access to services, reach more people, and decrease duplicative efforts. The community conversations showed gaps in awareness of local services and helped build connections and partnerships in real time, with individuals staying after to exchange information with each other.

Over 90% of survey takers strongly agreed that the library is important for the community.

The Germantown Community Library has worked to create and cultivate relationships throughout the Village and surrounding area. The library has started to go beyond community outreach to community partnership building. Hiring a Library Outreach Specialist in 2021 has helped solidify the library's outreach and community building efforts. The library is seen by many as a natural partner, whether they are hosting community events, participating in committees, or visiting locations off site. In fact, the library has regular requests from community partners to host, promote, or take part in local events and happenings. The library's success in this area has resulted in a real need to define and systematize community partnerships and the processes that can help with prioritization and to ensure these partnerships thrive.



Goal 4: Growing Community Awareness

The library, the Germantown community, and the surrounding area have an abundance of events, opportunities, and resources to offer and the Germantown Community Library can improve awareness of these through thoughtful partnerships and impactful communications.

Objectives

- Increase patron and community awareness of the resources and services offered by the library and Monarch Library System.
- Develop and implement communication tools to connect with different government boards and officials throughout the Germantown area, non-librariated communities and Washington County.
- Create a marketing plan that incorporates local communication channels.

There is always room for increased awareness of the services and resources available through the Germantown Community Library. Whether one is a resident of Germantown, Richfield, or Jackson, or a Germantown Village Trustee, messaging to showcase the work and value of the library should be clear and easy to find and follow. The library has a healthy (and growing) communications toolbox: the electronic newsletter and communications in the library are excellent ways to reach library users, and the library’s social media presence, with over 3,500 followers on Facebook, is a powerful way to reach those that visit the library less frequently. Gaps in various age groups and service populations provide opportunities for the library to increase awareness for non-library users.

The community survey showed high awareness of core library services, such as books to borrow, computers and wi-fi, and the children’s area. It also revealed some services the library could increase awareness of by using appropriate messaging and channels.

Less than a third of Regular Library Users indicated awareness of the following services at the Germantown Community Library



Community conversations highlighted the fact that effective communication is a challenge throughout Germantown and the surrounding area; people are not always sure where to find community information. Service providers and community groups shared a desire for a centralized pathway to amplify messages and reduce duplication of, or gaps in, sharing about services and events. In its physical and metaphorical role as a community center, the library has a role in helping improve awareness of community events—though this must be done with the library’s mission and capacity in mind.

Goal 5: Growing Organizational Wellbeing

The state of the Germantown Community Library depends on the financial and wellbeing of the library and of the library's staff. Both will be prioritized through careful practices and meaningful action.

Objectives

- Create and cultivate new philanthropic partnerships, sponsorships, and pathways to ensure the financial health of the library.
- Expand organizational capacity to maintain and grow service areas.
- Develop internal infrastructure to document and train on library activities, processes, and practices.
- Continuously promote an internal culture that focuses on staff wellbeing.

Stewardship, the responsible management of the library, is a core value of the Germantown Community Library administration and staff. It includes the responsibility to cultivate of income streams that are sustainable and supportive of the library's operations and the community's needs. The survey and community conversations showed the need for an expanded library with multi-purpose spaces that serve a diverse array of ages and stages. The library and the Board of Trustees understands that the funding of this initiative will need to involve a multi-pronged approach that includes donations, partnerships, and municipal support, both in Germantown and non-librariated communities the library serves.

The Germantown Community Library has been incredibly successful in pursuing its mission over the past several years. Program numbers have increased, outreach has been prioritized, and partnerships sought and sustained, all on top of the traditional operations of the library. This success means the library needs to look carefully at organizational capacity, balanced workloads, and the ability to attract and retain top notch staff, who are the heart of the library and its successes.

*"I have found that every interaction I have had with every staff member has been extremely friendly and showing a desire to help. Thank you!"
-Community Survey Response*



IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The Germantown Community Library Director will regularly update the Library Board each year of the 5-Year Plan (2023-2027) following the timeline below on the implementation progress of the strategic plan.



February / March

The library director, with staff input, will provide the Library Board, Village Board, and Monarch Library System with a report on progress made toward implementing the plan through prioritized activities/projects.



May / June

The library director, with staff input, and the Library Board will review current year goal progress, and make necessary changes based on changes in conditions and capacities. Additionally, the library director with staff and board input will identify key priority activities/projects for the next year, in preparation for the library's budget process.



June - November

The library director, with staff, library board and village input, prepares the library budget taking into consideration the identified activities/projects to achieve the defined goals.



September / October

The library director, with staff input, will provide the Library Board with a summary of the current year's goal progress and make necessary changes based on changes in conditions, capacities and remaining budget.



November / December

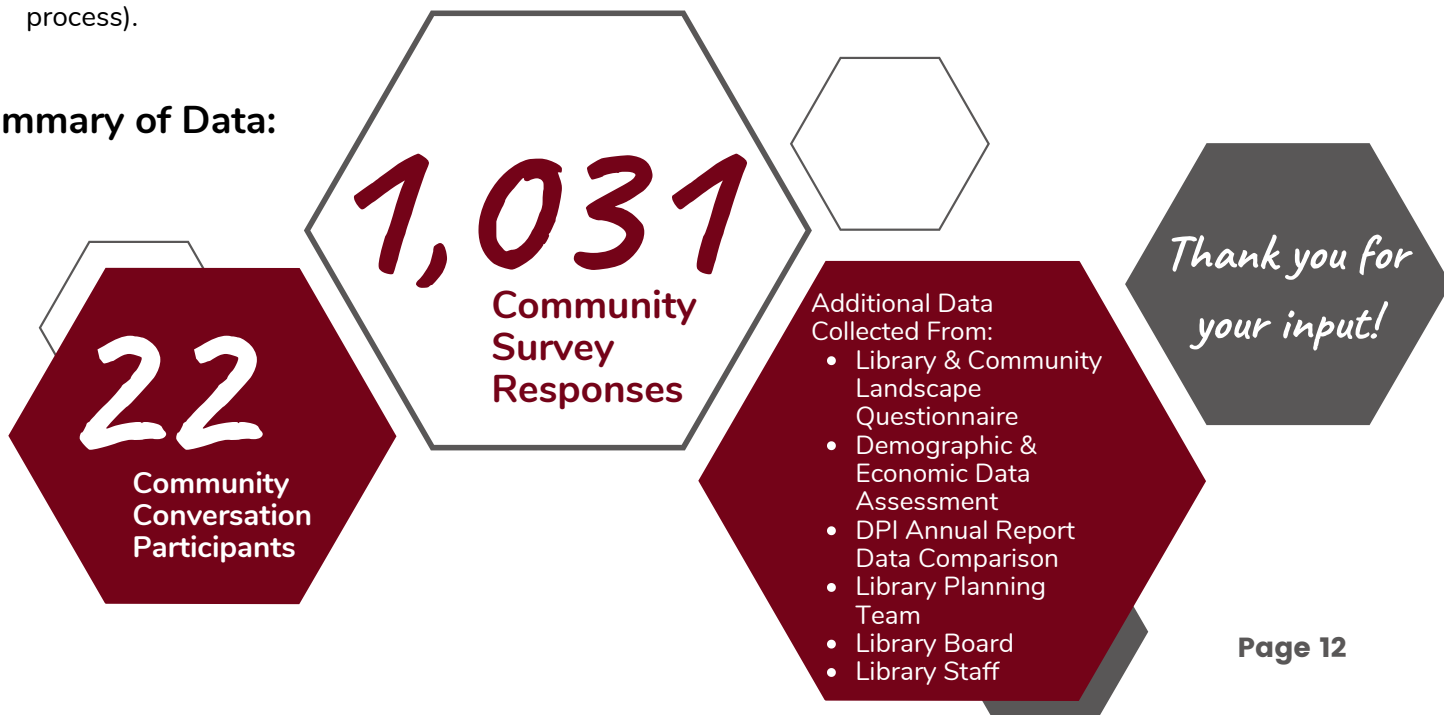
The library director, with supervisor input, will provide feedback to staff in their performance reviews on progress made on activities/projects for the past year.

ABOUT THE PROCESS

In late 2021, the Germantown Community Library formed a strategic planning committee with representatives from the library staff, Library Board, and the Library Friends group. This group, led by the library director, oversaw the planning process, from data and information gathering to the writing of the plan, with consultants from WiLS (Wisconsin Library Services) helping guide the process and providing data expertise.

- November 1, 2021: A Library and Community Landscape Questionnaire, completed by the planning team.
- January 11, 2022: A Library Staff SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results), facilitated by consultants. Work on the refreshed mission statement was also completed during this meeting.
- January 12 – February 7, 2022: Conducted a Community Survey that was completed by 1,031 community members, including both users and non-users of the library.
- February 3 -11, 2022: Three Community Conversations that were facilitated by consultants and attended by planning team members. The conversations were attended by twenty-three community members including business and civic leaders, educators, local residents, and library patrons from Germantown, Richfield and Jackson.
- Annual library operations and service data submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for the years 2015-2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic statistics for 2020 and 2021 were not used as a result of library closures and limited services available to patrons.
- Demographic and economic data from the American Community Survey and the 2000 and 2010 US Census (2020 data was not available publicly during this process).

Summary of Data:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This process would not have been possible without the involvement of the communities of Germantown, Richfield and Jackson. The library offers sincere appreciation for the time community members spent completing the survey and taking part in community conversations.

The library would also like to thank all of their staff members for their work and dedication throughout the planning process.

Special thanks to the planning committee members who spent several months and many hours ensuring that the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan meet the needs of the Germantown Community Library and those it serves. Members were:

- Trisha Smith, Library Director
- Connie Lloyd, Library Assistant Director
- Cara Reimer, Library Outreach Specialist
- Joyce Nelson, Library Board President and Monarch Library System Board Member
- Jan Miller, Library Board and Village of Germantown Trustee
- Jolletta Kerpan, Library Board Trustee and Germantown Chamber of Commerce Executive Assistant
- Barb Pueringer, Friends of the Germantown Community Library Member

2022 Library Board of Trustees

- Joyce Nelson, President
- Christa Potratz, Vice President
- Darlene Vosen, Treasurer
- Charlene Brady
- Jolletta Kerpan
- Jan Miller, Village Trustee Representative
- Trisha Smith, Library Director

Finally, the Germantown Community Library would like to thank Laura Damon-Moore, Kim Kiesewetter, and Melissa McLimans from WiLS for their plan consultation and facilitation services and data collection and analysis.



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