



STRATEGIC PLAN FY2021-2026

VISION

Advancing Library Excellence

MISSION

The citizens of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties will have equal access to information through the efficient, economic, and effective sharing of resources among public libraries and all types of information agencies.

▶ ABOUT THE PLAN

The Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) plays a critical role in the continuing vitality and growth of its partners: Calvert Library, Charles County Public Library, and St. Mary's County Library. To sustain forward momentum, anticipate challenges, and seize the opportunities that lie ahead, SMRLA has drawn on stakeholder research, best professional practices, and the collective wisdom and insights of its Board and partner library directors to develop this strategic plan for FY 2021—2026.

GOALS

- Model excellence in governance.
- Optimize operational effectiveness and sustainability.
- Ensure the highest quality technical, training, resource-sharing, and research services to the public libraries of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties.
- Collaborate with partner libraries to grow their technology, collections, and capacity.
- Leverage the collective talents of partner libraries to advance literacy, access to information and entertainment, and academic achievement in SMRLA's service area.



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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1 Governance

Create a stronger regional library governed by an engaged, committed, and educated Board of Trustees.

- Identify required SMRLA Board competencies and any capabilities gaps.
- Develop Board commitment document.
- Identify and cultivate recruitment targets.
- Develop programs for training, engaging, and retaining Board members.
- Create *ad hoc* issue-specific committees that report to the larger Board.
- Determine optimal number of meetings and rotate meeting times.
- Schedule annual retreats to assess Board progress toward previous year's goals and to establish subsequent year Board goals.
- Develop succession plans for SMRLA top management.
- Develop guidelines for reserve funds allocation and oversight.

2 Services

Convene partner groups for assessing and prioritizing training, cooperative purchasing, and other organizational needs.

Convene directors of partner libraries to develop a resource-sharing agreement regarding subscription products.

Support informed and responsive collection development.

- Facilitate a collection development cohort working group.
- Benchmark collections against peer libraries to collect and track collection performance data.
- Reorient collection strategy and logistics around principles, trends, and best practices in collection development.
- Train on weeding protocols and public perception management.
- Collect and disseminate market data to support partner acquisition strategies.
- Train on the application of data from various sources, such as Orange Boy, Tableau, etc. to develop collection development plans.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, CONTINUED

2

Services, continued

Continue to support and develop SMRLA and partner library technologies.

- Create an Innovation Committee that identifies and assesses emerging technologies for partner library adoption.
- Hire a data librarian to manage e-resources, data analysis, and reporting.
- Develop market testing processes and procedures to inform decision-making.
- Determine baseline measures of asset (databases, etc.) performance for informed decision making.
- Acquire and roll out technology on the basis of statistical and best practices evidence.
- Document SMRLA and partner library roles, responsibilities, and funding parameters for technology acquisition, ongoing support, and usage.

3

Organizational Capacity

Train for and encourage the participation of partner libraries, with a particular emphasis on Board engagement, in both local and statewide advocacy and outreach.

Develop and leverage partnerships with groups to raise the perceived value of libraries in addressing wider community needs.

Continue to seek grants to supplement local funding for special projects.

- Consider additional staff to coordinate, create, and manage grant proposals and grant funding.

APPENDIX: MAJOR THEMES—SMRLA TRUSTEE INTERVIEWS

Interviews conducted in February 2019

What services provided by SMRLA do you believe the community most values?

- Access to the collections
- ILL transfer of materials
- Up-to-date resources
- Technology infrastructure and offerings
- Training

Over the course of your term(s), what would you say the Board’s biggest challenge has been?

- Keeping up with technology
- Securing equal involvement and committed participation from the three county libraries
- “Split allegiance” issues: Trustees represent their respective counties, while being expected to focus on SMRLA at the table

What do you see as the biggest issues facing SMRLA as it looks to the future?

- Strategy and action plan for the deployment of the accumulated reserve funds
- Board recruitment / retention / ongoing training
Note: The current scheduling of monthly board meetings is a significant barrier to the recruitment of qualified Trustees who reflect community demographics. Convening during the business day excludes those in the workforce—particularly those who commute—or who are otherwise committed from serving.
- Institutional memory / the need for succession planning
- Clarification of library roles (Is SMRLA “the boss”? Or is it a partner?)