

# 21st Century Libraries Initiative

how your participation will help transform your library

The MVLS 21st Century Libraries Initiative is designed to help all MVLS member libraries reach their potential as community resources that are valued, used and supported. The initiative activities of effective community engagement, detailed planning, improved services, more effective communications and more productive advocacy help every MVLS library secure a thriving future.

This suite of activities forms the Library Impact Cycle. Its emphasis on community, mission, impact and sustainability will help all libraries reach the 21st Century Libraries Initiative goals of achieving support, value, and use levels that compare well with those of successful libraries across New York State. The Library Impact Cycle, repeated indefinitely, helps libraries achieve this success.



## Services for Participating Libraries

- MVLS provides staff, services and templates to assist with robust **community engagement and planning**, resulting in new or updated public library mission statements & plans of service.
- MVLS provides funding and guidance, assisting libraries with developing **new services and programs**, reaching new audiences.
- MVLS provides expertise and assistance, enabling libraries to develop effective **communications plans** that educate the community on the value of library services.
- MVLS provides staff services and templates that facilitate **library sustainability plans and funding initiatives**, with the goal of increasing library funding to the level enjoyed in typical New York State communities.

## Initiative Goal

Public Libraries in all MVLS communities are highly valued, extensively used and generously supported. Libraries are at the center of thriving communities.

## Planned Activities

All participating libraries will participate in all five activity areas as outlined below.

### Community Engagement

through surveys, focus groups and contacts with community organizations.

**Strategic Plans** give libraries detailed, timely action plans for expanding service.

**Service Improvements** bring in new users and make the library the center of the community.

**Communications Plans** help inform the community on the impact of library services.

**Advocacy Plans** identify steps for improving local funding, ensuring a sustainable future.

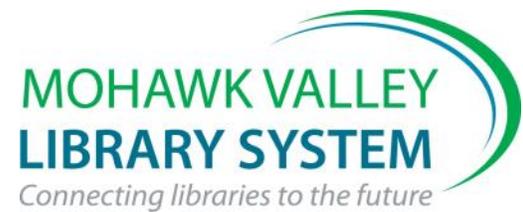
## Timeline

Project activities begin with Community Engagement in 2017. Individual libraries set their own specific timeline. All participating libraries are expected to complete one library impact cycle within 4 years.

# How Your Library Participates

MVLS member libraries that wish to participate in the 21st Century Libraries Initiative must commit to the following sequential actions:

- Identification of a library project team that includes, at minimum, the library director, 2 library board members (one must be an officer) and at least one additional library stakeholder
- Representation by members of the library project team at every relevant MVLS workshop and meeting on the initiative
- Robust community engagement that, at minimum, reaches the effective library service area (the funded area) in the following ways:
  - \* Community survey responses from at least 2% of the service population
  - \* Community listening session participation by at least 1% of the service population
  - \* Identification and engagement of at least 2 under-served community groups
- Development of a strategic plan/plan of service that includes:
  - \* A reaffirmed or new mission statement that addresses the desired impact of library services
  - \* Brief description of services that the library provides or wishes to provide
  - \* Description of a strategic direction informed by the community engagement activities
  - \* Sustainability goals and objectives, including plans to increase local public funding
- Implementation of at least one public service initiative from the strategic plan. MVLS grants will partially fund this activity. The project must be formally approved by the library board and by MVLS, and must include:
  - \* Services to an unserved or underserved population group
  - \* A new service that the library does not already provide
  - \* Evaluation and adaptation based on the strategic plan
- Development and implementation of a communications plan designed to educate the public on the impact of the library's services. Communications plans must include:
  - \* Integration with the MVLS communications plan
  - \* Goals for engaging with and presenting to several community organizations
  - \* Upgrades to the library webpages and social media sites
  - \* Collecting stories for the MVLS "Library Impact Stories" initiative
  - \* Educating the community on library funding and sustainability issues
- Development of a sustainability plan with the goal of reaching the regional average for local public funding. The plan must include:
  - \* Specific, progressive activities
  - \* A specific timeline



## The Benefit to My Library

Member Libraries that participate become 21st Century Libraries; libraries that are:

- Engaged with, valued by, and responsive to the community
- Educating the community on the impact and value of library services
- Funded and used at rates consistent with Capital District and NYS averages
- Sustainable for the foreseeable future

## What Libraries Receive

- Expertise in community engagement, marketing and advocacy. MVLS provides staff and resources, helping with in-depth community engagement, effective communications and successful advocacy.
- Recommendations and strategies that help the library educate the community through regular feedback mechanisms and outreach to community groups and population segments.
- An aspirational mission statement and strategic plan created with community input.
- Grant funding (\$1,000 - \$7,500, based on library size) assists with new services as identified in the newly developed strategic plan.
- A communications plan and strategy with templates for telling the story of how each library impacts and benefits its community.
- A sustainability plan maps out goals, activities, and a timeline for increasing library funding and use to ensure the library's future.