



THE NEWBERRY

Our Collection Is Your Collection

Newberry Library
Strategic Plan
July 2022



Our Collection Is Your Collection



Newberry Library Core Collections

American History and Culture

American Indian and Indigenous Studies

Chicago and the Midwest

Genealogy and Local History

History of the Book

Maps, Travel, and Exploration

Medieval, Renaissance, and

Early Modern Studies

Modern Manuscripts and Archives

Performing Arts

Postcards

Religion

now also looking forward with
anticipation to Japan, where
I will be. If I like it, I'll
come back on another ship.
You raised a mustache and
it is a very grand affair. Has
a photograph of
I come to visit
home again?
I suppose it
spring when it
your bad weather
able to in Chin



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Part I. Introduction

The Newberry Library is among Chicago's oldest and most distinctive cultural institutions. Founded in 1887 and located since 1893 in its current building just across the street from Washington Square Park (aka "Bughouse Square"), the Newberry has proudly offered learning opportunities free and open to all for 135 years.

Today, the Newberry is a premier center for humanities scholarship and a global destination for both online and in-person learning. And yet, the Newberry Library remains misunderstood or unknown by many people both in and beyond Chicago. That might be explained in part by the fact that the humanities are, for many, an abstraction. Moreover, the growing collection of books, maps, manuscripts, and other materials at the Newberry is remarkably diverse and, therefore, difficult to describe in a short sound bite. The diversity of our collections and activities, however, makes the Newberry ideally suited to the nature of human curiosity, which is expansive, varied, and ever-evolving. Since I arrived at the Newberry in 2019, we have focused on creating the conditions for multiple audiences to appreciate and take full advantage of our extraordinary resources. Our five-year strategic plan further advances this priority: we are seeking to demystify the Newberry, to welcome all curious learners, and to ensure that all who are engaged in better understanding the world know that our collection is relevant and accessible to them.



In the process of crafting this plan and searching for opportunities to expand awareness and deepen understanding of the Newberry's resources, several cross-cutting themes have emerged. First, we recognize that our historically significant collection must be relevant to today's conversations and communities. Second, our work must focus on bridging divides—spanning academic disciplines; creating opportunities for interaction between scholars and the public; connecting past, present, and future; bringing diverse communities into shared conversations; and serving multiple modes of learning both onsite and online. Third, the Newberry is part of multiple ecosystems—from cultural institutions in Chicago to research libraries across the globe; the more we collaborate with our many peers, the more the value of our resources will be appreciated. Finally, we have thought long and hard about what diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging mean at the Newberry. As a way of moving beyond intention to action, we have considered the implications of these concepts across all the goals in this plan, rather than isolating them as a separate area of focus.

This plan is built on four pillars:

Pillar 1. Advance and Disseminate Knowledge

Pillar 2. Build, Diversify, and Sustain Communities of Learning

Pillar 3. Grow, Preserve, and Increase Access to the Collection

Pillar 4. Strengthen Institutional Health

Several priorities throughout the plan appear under more than one of these pillars, signaling the important objective to foster collaboration across the library as well as with peer organizations outside the Newberry.

A strategic plan only succeeds if the sense of ownership is broad and genuine among all who must carry out its aims. This plan was developed in collaboration with the staff of the Newberry Library and with our Board of Trustees. Conversations with outside observers, library users, and supporters of the Newberry informed our priorities as well. As proud as we are of this plan, we know that it represents the beginning of much work that must be done to achieve what we all want for the Newberry Library in the next five years. We invite all of you to be a part of moving the Newberry forward.

Daniel Greene
President and Librarian
July 2022

Part II. Our Mission



The Newberry Library—free and open to the public—fosters a deeper understanding of our world by inspiring research and learning in the humanities and encouraging conversations about ideas that matter to diverse audiences. Our mission is rooted in a growing and accessible collection of rare and historical materials that spans more than six centuries of human experience.

Part III. Our Values



Curiosity

Curiosity lies at the heart of our activities. A spirit of inquiry both fuels and is fueled by the curiosity of all who engage with the Newberry.

Knowledge

The Newberry inspires and supports learning by inviting library users and staff to advance their knowledge through research, scholarship, and public discussion. We view knowledge as an exchange—freely shared and received.

Service

Always being attuned to the needs and desires of library users onsite and online helps us guide their engagement with our collection, staff, and learning opportunities. Our sense of service also guides our behavior toward our own colleagues, which helps create a culture of mutual respect in which we all advance the Newberry's mission together.

Relevance

The value of our collection and expertise is enhanced by our capacity to connect to what is happening in the world—locally, nationally, and globally. For this reason, we focus on how our resources matter, and how to make them matter more.

Belonging

The Newberry's vitality requires that we both find ways to attract new and diverse participants to our offerings and foster a sense of belonging among all who participate. We do this by being intentional about connecting people, building trust across groups, inviting multiple perspectives, and asking whose stories are told, by whom.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

The Newberry Library's Board of Trustees adopted this statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion in June 2021.

The Newberry's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is essential to our mission: providing free and open access to a collection spanning more than six centuries, building and sustaining communities of learning, advancing and disseminating knowledge, and acquiring and preserving materials that represent a range of perspectives and experiences—including those that historically have been underappreciated, marginalized, or silenced.

Although the Newberry has been free and open to the public since opening its doors in 1887, the conception of the public that the library serves has not always been inclusive. As a civic institution that values the free exchange of ideas, the Newberry must embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion in order to be a resource for all of Chicago and beyond. Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion contributes to creative thinking, advances scholarship and the creation of new knowledge, and opens educational opportunities that enrich our understanding of the past, present, and future.

It is the Newberry's duty to ensure that attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion informs all that we do, internally and externally. This is an urgent priority for the staff and Board of Trustees as we shape our institution and outreach to everyone who engages with the Newberry. We are dedicated to this essential work, the investment of resources, and the process of learning and growth necessary to evolve as an institution.



Part IV. Pillars, Goals, and Tactics





Pillar 1. Advance and Disseminate Knowledge

Vision

The Newberry will become a more active and interactive center for the exchange of ideas, using creative and innovative methods to engage multiple audiences, disciplines, and communities. Over the next five years we expect to see a measurable increase in the use of our collection onsite and online. Staff and scholars will work together to set the pace for innovative research in the areas of our collection strengths.

Goals and Tactics

1. Create opportunities for more (and more global) interactivity around the collection.

- a. Collaborate in the production of new knowledge with diverse users, both locally and globally, in fields for which the Newberry is best known, while elevating underappreciated strengths of the collection.
- b. Focus on opportunities for staff and library users to co-create new knowledge using digital humanities methodologies (e.g., crowdsourcing and other methods of collaborative research).
- c. Improve technology infrastructure throughout the Newberry building and access from beyond the building to digital collections, enabling simultaneous interaction with physical and digital collections.

2. Advance the Newberry as a premier center of research for scholars, graduate students, undergraduates, and staff.

- a. Design opportunities for the Newberry to function as a “learning lab” that enables collaboration and exchange of ideas among staff, scholars, graduate students, and undergraduates.
- b. Organize programs and foster partnerships to advance new research, especially in areas of greatest collection strengths.
- c. Strategically select areas of the collection for digitization and enable engagement with evolving digital research methodologies.

3. Expand and diversify constituents to foster meaningful exchange with Newberry resources.

- a. Diversify collection users (artists, designers, poets, choreographers, fiction writers, book artists, genealogists, etc.), find new ways to support their work, and create networks among them.
- b. Deepen reciprocal relationships and promote collaboration with Indigenous and other underrepresented communities to whom the collection is relevant.
- c. Enhance new offerings and discoverability of existing offerings for teachers and students, especially undergraduates.

4. Better position the Newberry as a meeting ground for the exchange of ideas and a bridge between scholars and broader audiences.

- a. Create opportunities for scholars and other leaders in their fields to engage in conversations that appeal to both scholarly and non-academic audiences.
- b. Through marketing, media outreach, and social media, position the Newberry staff and collection as resources for understanding the past, present, and future.
- c. Collaborate with cultural institutions, university partners, and peer libraries locally, nationally, and internationally to amplify the Newberry's reach and influence.

Pillar 2. Build, Diversify, and Sustain Communities of Learning

Vision

With a sophisticated understanding of our audiences and their expectations, the Newberry will become a more recognized meeting ground for multiple communities, allowing us to learn from them and with them. Over the next five years, we expect to see a marked increase in attendance at exhibitions and programs, with greater audience diversity. Local and national recognition of the Newberry's resources will result in new partnerships and elevate our role as an important civic institution.

Goals and Tactics

1. Improve our understanding of Newberry users and audiences across all areas of the library.

- a. Invest in audience research and provide more opportunities for feedback from all library users and visitors.
- b. Add resources dedicated to audience development in public engagement, research, and library services.

2. Design all programs, exhibitions, and environments (onsite and online) with clearly identified audiences in mind.

- a. Curate programmatic offerings that are relevant to contemporary issues, bring leaders in their fields to the Newberry, and provide audiences with opportunities to engage with presenters and each other.
- b. Organize engaging, relevant exhibitions that highlight our collection strengths, appeal to diverse audiences, and introduce the Newberry to new audiences.
- c. Help audiences better understand opportunities for them at the Newberry and create intuitive pathways for engaging with our offerings.

3. Strengthen awareness of the Newberry as a premier location for learning about the history and cultures of Chicago and the Midwest.

- a. Promote the Newberry's Chicago-related and Midwest-related collections to broad and diverse communities, including scholars, teachers, students, writers, artists, and others.
- b. Design Chicago-related and Midwest-related programming that reaches broad and diverse communities.
- c. Lead and collaborate in partnerships with cultural organizations, universities, and others that advance understanding of Chicago and the Midwest.

Pillar 3. Grow, Preserve, and Increase Access to the Collection

Vision

Over the next five years, we will increase resources and refine policies that allow for growth in the areas of existing collection strength and implement a storage plan to ensure that the collection remains accessible for generations to come. The collection will be widely accessible and relevant to diverse users, onsite and online.

Goals and Tactics

- 1. Improve the discoverability of our collection to diverse audiences.**
 - a. Increase the scope, depth, and facility of digital discovery.
 - b. Create new ways for library users to interact directly with and learn from staff, both onsite and online.
 - c. Reduce cataloging and processing backlogs and expand efforts to adopt inclusive description practices for collection materials.
- 2. Expand and enrich our areas of collection strength and ensure that materials of historical value are preserved in culturally responsible ways.**
 - a. Build relationships with institutions and organizations that may want to deposit their records at the Newberry.
 - b. Build relationships with living writers, artists, families, businesses, and other individuals who may want to deposit their records at the Newberry.
 - c. Partner with communities and individuals to ensure that materials of historical significance are preserved and accessible.

3. Connect the collection to ideas and events relevant to diverse audiences.

- a. Create and promote educational opportunities and digital resources that help diverse audiences deepen their understanding of the collection and its relevance to the contemporary world.
- b. Design programs for scholars, teachers, and students that enable access to and use of our collections in ways that align with classroom and curriculum needs.
- c. Collaborate with artists, writers, and others in ways that allow them to discover and surface our collection to broader audiences.

4. Ensure strategic collection growth and access through preservation, storage, and management.

- a. Devise and implement a plan for offsite storage.
- b. Advocate for collaboration across Chicago-area repositories to more intentionally consider and coordinate what area libraries collect.
- c. Ensure that collection development policies guide all gift acceptance and acquisition decisions.

Pillar 4. Strengthen Institutional Health

Vision

Over the next five years, the Newberry will improve its financial position, internal culture, and governance, facilitating recruitment and retention of staff. Collaboration and problem solving across all program areas and between staff and the Board of Trustees will create a stronger institution. Our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion across all areas will ensure that the Newberry's programs, collection, and operations reflect the values and perspectives of broader audiences. Board members will actively leverage their relationships in multiple communities to advance the Newberry's mission and make the library a point of civic pride.

Goals and Tactics

- 1. Reshape our collective work culture by promoting more experimentation, collaboration, and creative problem solving among staff.**
 - a. Encourage and support relevant professional development and career growth opportunities.
 - b. Sustain and advance ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in consultation with staff DEI committee and external advisors.
 - c. Develop and implement a compensation strategy for library staff based on internal and external benchmarks.

- 2. Align fundraising and financial practices with this strategic plan's goals and tactics.**
 - a. Adopt a holistic view of the annual budget that reflects and supports institutional priorities.
 - b. Build knowledge of fundraising and financial practices among staff and key constituents.
 - c. Grow our donor base, including by seeking new opportunities to better communicate the library's need for annual fund giving and other financial support.
 - d. Explore the feasibility of a capital campaign and other fundraising strategies to enhance the library's investment portfolio and accomplish the goals articulated in this plan.

3. Transform publicly accessible and staff spaces to serve current and future library users.

- a. Improve the efficiency and use of multiple library spaces inside and outside the building.
- b. Adapt spaces to enable more collaborative work among staff and library users as well as simultaneous interaction with physical and digital collections.
- c. Make publicly accessible spaces of the building more accessible and intuitive to all library users.

4. Build the Board of Trustees.

- a. Diversify the Board composition by age, race, ethnicity, and skill set.
- b. Prioritize Board education and orientation to the institution, collection, and programs; create more opportunities for interaction between the Board and staff.
- c. Build a culture of Board members as “Newberry ambassadors” by more intentionally involving them in the organization’s activities.

Images

Inside front cover from upper left, clockwise

1. WWI color lithograph poster of immigrants arriving in New York harbor. Case wing d 522 25 w67 1917. **2.** Linda Benson with Chicago skyline in the background. Photo by Ben Bearskin. **3.** "A map of Chicago 100 years ago," Walter H. Conley, 1933. Map2F G4104.C6 S1 1933 .C6 **4.** Genealogical Tree of the Lippincott Family in America, from the Ancestors of Richard and Abigail Lippincott. E 7 .L675 **5.** Letter and sketch by cartoonist John T. McCutcheon. Midwest MS McCutcheon: Box 55, Folder 1327. **6.** Illustration of Saint George killing the dragon. Book of Hours, ca. 1455. Case MS 35. **7.** The Book of Revelation, printed as a block book, ca. 1470. VAULT folio Inc. 15. **8.** Postcard from the John I. Monroe Collection, ca. 1910. JM227. **9.** Manuscript of music for the lute by Vincenzo Capirola, ca. 1517. VAULT Case MS minus VM 140 .C25 **10.** Map detail from *Geographia Universalis*, based on Ptolemy, 1540. Baskes g1005 1540. **11.** Illustration from *Nova Reperta (New Discoveries)* by Johannes Stradanus, ca. 1580. VAULT Case Wing oversize Z 412 .85.

Page 2

Rendering of the Newberry Library from the southwest, ca. 1892. Watercolor illustration by architect Henry Ives Cobb.

Page 4, clockwise from left

1. High school students from Chicago Tech Academy. **2.** Hand-colored woodcut from the German translation of the *Fables of Bidpai*, 1483. Folio Inc. 2556.5. **3.** Manuscript of *La Sfera*, a cosmography, astrology, and geography textbook written in verse by the Florentine silk merchant Gregorio Dati, 1425. VAULT slipcase Ayer MS map 19. **4.** Participants in a seminar sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) look at primary sources. **5.** Russell Lee, *Chicago Skyline and 14th St. Passenger Yards*. CB&Q A-5-1: Box 3, Folder 189.

Page 6, clockwise from upper left

1. Marbled paper created by Alberto Valesse and part of the Norma Rubovits collection. **2.** Fabiola Ramirez participates in a summer workshop learning to decipher manuscripts in Spanish. **3.** Paintings by Jeffrey Gibson, Native American artist, inspired by the paintings of E. A. Burbank in the Newberry's collection. **4.** Work by Native American artist Chris Pappan, inspired by ledger drawings from the Newberry's collection. **5.** Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago performs at the Newberry.

Page 9, clockwise from upper left

1. Calligraphy book by writing master Jan van den Velde, ca. 1600. Wing ms zw 646 v5428. **2.** Newberry Bookshop. **3.** Two volunteers in the Conservation Lab make protective enclosures for books. **4.** *Map of the Lands in Tultepec and Jaltocán Regions Adjacent to the Hacienda de Santa Inés*, 1569. Ayer MS 1801 map 1. **5.** Participants from a seminar sponsored by the NEH examine maps from the Newberry collection.

Page 10, clockwise from left

1. The Newberry Welcome Center. **2.** Visitors at the exhibition *Pictures from an Exposition: Visualizing the 1893 World's Fair*. **3.** Portrait of 18th-century writing teacher Marie Claude Violet. From *Portraits of Writing Masters and Mistresses*. Case Wing Oversize NE390 .P67 box 1. **4.** Bike ride through Pilsen and Humboldt Park to view mural artwork commemorating Latin American revolutions. **5.** Map of Tenochtitlan and the Gulf of Mexico, 1524. Ayer 655.51.C8.

Page 11, clockwise from left

1. Participants in a seminar sponsored by the NEH look at a globe. **2.** A visitor explores materials in an exhibition on the 1893 World's Fair. **3.** A leaf from a Gutenberg Bible printed on vellum. VAULT oversize Inc. 56.1. **4.** Ruth Page in *Variations on Euclid*, 1933. Dance MS Barzel Research Box 54. **5.** *The New Yorker's Idea of the Map of the United States* by John T. McCutcheon. Published in the *Chicago Tribune*, July 27, 1922.

Inside back cover

These images of local powwows were featured in a 1985 Newberry exhibition titled *Seeing Indian in Chicago*, produced in collaboration with the Chicago American Indian community. Photographers: Joseph Kazumura and Peter F. Weil.

Land Acknowledgment

The Newberry Library wrote the following land acknowledgment in partnership with the Chicago American Indian Center.

Located near the confluence of several waterways, the Newberry Library sits on land that intersects with the aboriginal homelands of several tribal nations: the Council of the Three Fires: the Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe Nations; the Illinois Confederacy: the Peoria and Kaskaskia Nations; and the Myaamia, Wea, Thakiwaki, and Meskwaki Nations. The Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Kiikaapoi, and Mascouten Nations also call the region of northeast Illinois home. Indigenous people continue to live in this area and celebrate their traditional teachings and lifeways. Today, Chicago is home to one of the largest urban Indigenous communities in the United States, and this land remains an important place for Indigenous peoples. As a Chicago institution, it is the Newberry's responsibility to acknowledge this historical context and build reciprocal relationships with the tribal nations on whose lands we are situated.





THE NEWBERRY

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