



Michelle Jeske

City Librarian & Executive Director
Denver Public Library

Michelle Jeske is the City Librarian and Executive Director for Denver Public Library, leading the largest urban public library system in the state of Colorado with 27 locations and about 800 employees and over 4.4 million annual visitors.

Michelle is a veteran executive with 30 years of experience in libraries and was named the City Librarian and Executive Director in 2015. Michelle is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the organization. Under her leadership, a strategic planning effort resulted in a new vision, mission, and values that guide the organization's objectives and annual action plans. This new vision also led to a ballot initiative in 2022 where Denver voters approved a dedicated property tax providing approximately \$37M in additional annual funding for the library. Today, the Denver Public Library has a \$95M operating budget and a growing annual capital investment.

Michelle is a visionary leader focused on creating and seizing opportunities and driving impact. Under her leadership, the Denver Public Library has increased open hours by growing staff to serve our community better. Through several city bond programs, multiple buildings have been renovated, resulting in more welcoming spaces through modernization and deferred maintenance efforts. The Denver Public Library also added one new branch to its network, with two new branches projected to open in the next several years, bringing the total to 29 locations in Denver. Michelle was deeply involved in envisioning and fundraising for the major renovation of the Central Library.

Under her direction, the Denver Public Library has strengthened services for youth, families, older adults, immigrants and refugees, people without digital access, and people experiencing homelessness. In 2015, the Denver Public Library became one of the first library systems in the nation to employ a social worker. Today, it serves as a national model with a robust team of social workers and peer navigators serving the most vulnerable in our community.

Michelle has worked for the Denver Public Library since 2001, serving in several positions, including Director of Collections, Technology and Innovation, and Manager of Web Information Services and the Community Technology Center. Before the Denver Public Library, Michelle





worked for the TLC CARL Corporation, the San Antonio Public Library, and the New York Public Library.

Her honors include Public Library Association (PLA) Leadership Fellow, Colorado Librarian of the Year, and Library Journal Mover and Shaker. Michelle has been the Chair of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries Board and sits on its Member Council. Michelle has served on the PLA Board of Directors and is a PLA Past President. She serves on PLA's Budget and Finance Committee and Metro Denver Impact 100's Education & Engagement and Grant Liaison Committees. Michelle is a member of the International Women's Forum.

Michelle earned her Master's of Librarianship from the University of Washington and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and Political Science from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. She also holds a Master's certificate in Organizational Development from Colorado State University. Michelle's family lives in the Clayton neighborhood of Denver and includes a husband, two cats, and a dog, she enjoys playing and reading with her young niece, traveling, making mosaics, reading, hiking, cooking, and fermentation.