



Bartholomew County Public Library

"Providing Resources for Lifelong Learning and Enjoyment"

Strategic Plan

2019-2023

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees

January 14, 2019

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to serve as a guide for the Bartholomew County Public Library over the next 5 years as we strive to be intentional about where we direct our resources, skills, and talents in order to have the greatest impact in our community.

This strategic plan was developed using a modified version of *Strategic Planning for Results* written by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association. The *Strategic Planning for Results* process is based upon three assumptions.

1. Excellence must be defined locally.
 - a. It results when library services match community needs, interests, and priorities.
2. Excellence is possible for both large and small libraries.
 - a. It rests more on commitment than unlimited resources and stresses resource allocation to implement the plan.
3. Excellence is a moving target.
 - a. Even when achieved, excellence must be continually maintained. If you are coasting, the only way you go is downhill.

Definitions

Library Service Response- what a library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs.

Goal- The benefit the community will receive because the library provides a specific service response.

Objective- The way the library will measure progress toward reaching a goal.

Possible Activities- A list of tasks to implement the plan; the possible activities describe the kinds of programs and services the library hopes to do over the life of the strategic plan to meet the community needs.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR RESULTS



The Process

In August 2015, a community survey was created by the library's management team and distributed throughout the community in both physical and electronic formats. Throughout the fall of 2015, BCPL staff conducted 25 individual conversations with community leaders and key community partners such as the Columbus Area Arts Council, Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Foundation for Youth, Love Chapel, Lincoln-Central Neighborhood Family Center, Mill Race Center, KidsCommons, and the Community Education Coalition.

In September 2015, BCPL closed to the public to offer a staff in-service day to understand the strategic planning process and to contribute their thoughts and ideas regarding the future of BCPL services. The BCPL Board of Trustees held a public retreat in October to hear the results of the individual and group conversations, the public survey, and staff in-service as well as to understand the current picture of library services and the community needs assessment from the United Way of Bartholomew County.

From this meeting, the Board developed a consensus around five service responses that the library should focus on (in no particular order):

- **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning**
 - Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.
- **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure**
 - Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them, and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.
- **Create Young Readers: Early Literacy**
 - Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.
- **Connect and Thrive in the Digital World: Public Internet Access and Technology Literacy**
 - Residents will have high-speed access to the internet and will have programs and services designed to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources available digitally.
- **Succeed in School**
 - Students will have the resources they need to succeed in school.

Using these service priorities, the staff then utilized a brainstorming board to document their thoughts regarding the specific goals and activities that best fulfill these objectives. From there a large staff committee made up of representatives of every location and department met to take these staff ideas and distill them into concrete goals for each service priorities. These draft goals were sent out to the entire staff for feedback.

The Library's management team then started to work on objectives for each goal and also elicited feedback on these from all staff. All draft goals and objectives were presented to the Library Board in December for initial thoughts and comments and on January 18, 2016 the Board adopted the final plan.

Throughout 2016, 2017, and 2018 BCPL staff have been hard at work implementing the strategic plan and have made great strides towards many of the goals and objectives. Some highlights include:

- Creation of two mini-locations (Foundation for Youth and the Anderson Community Center)
- Investments in furniture and other upgrades to make our facilities more welcoming and inviting
- Addition of the Columbus Indiana Architectural Archives collection and staff to the library
- Many new partnerships including the Book Express with the Literacy Task Force
- Dramatic increase in programs conducted off site
- New Programs to reach populations not previously using the library (Skill Builders, STEAM)
- Increased investment in digital and electronic materials
- New staff to focus on program and outreach
- Large increase in school outreach
- Digital Access Cards handed out regularly to decrease barriers to accessing materials
- Elimination of overdue fines

In the fall of 2018, talks with community partners such as the Columbus Area Arts Council, Bartholomew County Literacy Task Force, Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Foundation for Youth and Mill Race Center made it clear that many of our key community partners appreciated our achievements and the progress we have made in key areas. However, with many of our goals we still had some work to accomplish.

The library's management team met to discuss the 2019-2023 plan and agreed that based on this feedback and our progress, the service priorities and overall goals should remain the same for the new plan. New suggestions for additions and adjustments to objectives and possible activities were made and drafted for the Library Board of Trustees to look over in December 2018 and then approve at the January 2019 public meeting.

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure

Goal 1: BCPL will expand our presence in the community and outside the walls of our traditional locations to showcase the library's central role in the promotion and importance of reading.

Objectives:

Each year our circulation and usage of eMaterials will increase by 5%.

Each year the library will conduct 50 offsite programs that showcase the library's role in the promotion of the importance of reading.

By December 31, 2020, the library will establish 2 additional mini-locations at offsite locations to provide access to physical and digital collections.

Possible Activities

- Support book discussion groups (physical and virtual) in the community
- Lend devices such as tablets, laptops, Kindles, etc...
- Explore other agencies to partner with
- Create videos of community leaders reading and discussing the impact of reading

Goal 2: Patrons will have the help and resources needed to find appropriate materials easily and in a timely manner.

Objectives:

Each year at least 85% of patrons surveyed will indicate they were able to discover and find the material they hoped to find.

Each year the number of patron complaints that they cannot locate an item will decrease by 5%.

Each year staff will receive at least 2 trainings or programs that directly relate to readers' advisory and helping patrons discover new items to read, view or listen.

Possible Activities

- Promote and streamline the patron request and interlibrary loan process
- Make sure resources of all formats are easily discoverable through our catalog
- Make our fiction collections as browseable as possible
- Investigate genrefying collections
- Grow our in-person and virtual readers' advisory services
- Create mechanism for formal real-time feedback from patrons regarding missing items and/or not being able to find something

Goal 3: BCPL will maintain a high quality, diverse, and entertaining collection of materials and programs.

Objectives:

Each year at least 85% of patrons surveyed will indicate that we have a high quality, diverse, and entertaining collection of materials and programs.

Response levels to patron requests will always be 100% within a week of receiving.

Each year the total collections budget for the system will increase by at least 1%

By December 31, 2021, 2 new language collections will be added.

Possible Activities

- Update and Revise Collection Development Policy
- Support book discussion groups (physical and virtual) in the community
- Make sure resources of all formats are easily discoverable through our catalog
- Investigate new collections such as video games, expansion of board games, etc...
- Analyze current collections to make sure we are meeting demand and interest

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Goal 1: Patrons will have access to programs that further their learning, literacy and personal enrichment.

Objectives:

Each year the number of participants in the Summer Reading Challenge will increase by 1%.

Each year the library will conduct at least the number of programs listed in each age segment that further learning, literacy, and/or personal enrichment within the community.

Children- 600

Teen- 360

Adult- 360

All Ages- 120

Each year, program evaluations will show that at least 85% of patrons indicated they improved their knowledge or skill level by attending our programs.

Possible Activities

- Partner with other agencies to allow us to conduct or sponsor programming
- Make videos of programs conducted available through the website or other means
- Continue to align youth programming with the 40 Development Assets
- Analyze current programming to make sure we are meeting demand and interest
- Investigate increasing programming for tweens (youth grades 4-6)
- Create program evaluation forms

Goal 2: Patrons will have help and resources needed to gain access to a high quality, easily accessible collection of learning resources for all ages.

Objectives:

Each year the number of digital access cards given out will increase by 2%.

Each year at least 85% of patrons surveyed will indicate they were able to discover and find the nonfiction material they hoped to find.

Response levels to patron requests will always be 100% within a week of receiving.

Possible Activities

- Promote and streamline the patron request and interlibrary loan process
- Use reference questions to identify and plug holes in our collection
- Make sure resources of all formats are easily discoverable through our catalog
- Continue to investigate other new formats
- Increase databases directed at youth

Goal 3: BCPL will provide a welcoming atmosphere to facilitate learning and education for everyone in the community.

Objectives:

Each year at least 85% of patrons surveyed will indicate that the library provides a welcoming atmosphere.

Each year group and individual use of tables, rooms, and spaces will increase by 2%.

Possible Activities

- Evaluate current locations to improve space allocation
- Continue to create seating spaces throughout
- Continue to create displays that are welcoming to all groups
- Analyze current meeting room policies
- Evaluate current locations to improve services to people with disabilities

Goal 4: BCPL will maintain strong genealogy, local history and archives departments that allows all to further their quest to understand their individual and collective past.

Objectives:

Each year the library will conduct or sponsor at least 15 genealogy, local history, or archives programs with at least 2 in each of the following age categories: Child, Teen, Adult, All ages

Response levels to patron requests will always be 100% within a week of receiving.

By December 31, 2020 another collection will be digitized

Possible Activities

- Staff training on genealogy/local history/archives resources
- Analyze request policies
- Continue to partner with other agencies and institutions such as the Historical Society, Genealogy Society, and the Yellow Trail Museum
- Increase investment in materials

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

Goal 1: BCPL will provide a collection that successfully addresses the needs of those patrons aged 0-5 and their parents and caregivers.

Objectives:

Each year at least 85% of patrons surveyed will indicate BCPL's collection met their needs.

Each year the circulation and in-house usage of board books, picture books and other related collections will increase 2%

Possible Activities

- Institute a program such as 1000 Books before Kindergarten
- Partner with Pediatricians and the Hospital to market
- Continue to investigate better shelving including face-out shelving to allow for more discovery

Goal 2: BCPL will promote early literacy among more members of the community by expanding our ability to provide programs and services in a playful and engaging environment.

Objectives:

Each year group and individual use of tables, rooms, and spaces in our children's areas will increase by 1%.

Each year the library will conduct or sponsor at least 50 early literacy programs.

Possible Activities

- Continue investing in new furnishings for the children's areas
- Purchase more interactive puzzles and activities to be used within the library
- Staff training in the key concepts and importance of early learning
- Continue to align youth programming with the 40 Development Assets

Goal 3: BCPL will specifically target programs and services to community members who do not regularly use the library.

Objectives:

By December 31, 2021, one new stop will be added to the Book Express route

Each year the number of books given out by the Book Express will increase by 1%

Each year the number of children visited outside of the library will increase by 2%

Possible Activities

- Engage parents at every step through handouts and specific outreach
- Partner with other agencies, institutions and businesses (i.e. WIC)

Connect and Thrive in the Digital World

Goal 1: BCPL will strengthen its abilities for providing remote, digitally delivered services.

Objectives:

Each year the eMaterials budget will increase at least 0.75%

By December 31, 2021 the library's collections will be 40% Digital/60% Physical

Possible Activities

- Lend devices for in-house and checkout for devices such as tablets, laptops, and Kindles
- Create Wi-Fi zones at offsite locations to access library resources
- Conduct patron surveys asking what specific eMaterials would like

Goal 2: BCPL will maintain a staff that supports, encourages, and understands the ever-changing digital landscape.

Objectives:

Each year staff will receive at least 4 trainings or programs that directly relate to technology and our digital resources

Through an annual staff survey, at least 85% will indicate that they feel more comfortable and knowledgeable with technology than the year before.

Possible Activities

- Create technology competencies for all staff
- Make technology competencies a part of annual performance evaluations
- Crosstrain among various departments

Goal 3: BCPL will teach and support the learning of tools and skills for people to work and enjoy their lives in the digital world.

Objectives:

Each year the library will conduct or sponsor at least 20 technology related programs at all locations and for all ages.

Each year the percentage of patrons using online courses such as those from Gale Courses or Niche Academy will increase 2%

Possible Activities

- Increase visibility and usage of Book-a-Librarian sessions
- Make sure technology and equipment is up to date at all times
- Partner with other venues and retail outlets to allow a library booth or table to showcase resources and assistance.

Goal 4: BCPL will support and encourage digital creativity among patrons

Each year participation in the Coder Dojo, STEAM and other associated programs will increase 2%.

Each year usage of Digital studio spaces will increase 2%.

Possible Activities

- Create more Coder Dojo style programs
- Make more investments in equipment and software to grow capabilities and therefore attendance
- Active marketing/promotion of spaces
- Integrate digital initiatives in other programs
- Partner with other agencies, institutions, and businesses

Succeed in School

Goal 1: BCPL will assist students at all level with the appropriate resources, programs, and services.

Objectives:

Each year, the library will partner with an additional school to ensure that every student has a library card.

Each year, the number of school requested library tours/visits will increase by 1%.

Possible Activities

- Partner with other agencies and institutions
- Investigate Tutor.com and other online homework help platform
- Analyze how we can best support local tutors
- Increase efforts to reach out to homeschool providers

Goal 2: BCPL will reach out to students, teachers, parents and caregivers to bring our resources, programs, and services to them rather than expecting them to come to the library.

Objectives:

Each year the number of digital access cards given out will increase by 2%.

Each year the number of school and daycare visits will increase by 2%.

Possible Activities

- Continue to push for Digital Access Cards at every possible venue
- Participate in fairs, expos, etc...
- Establish countywide librarian network/roundtable to promote cooperation
- Provide list of programs that homeschools, preschools, and daycares could request us to conduct
- Partner with other agencies and institutions

Evaluation

Regular and ongoing evaluation of this strategic plan is crucial to success. As part of the continual evaluation, the goals and objectives will form the framework of reports from and to the library board and therefore the community.

The Patron Services, Collections, and Programming teams bring together staff serving in the various departments of the library. Each of these teams will be responsible for their specific areas of the strategic plan to implement and evaluate. The director and assistant director will work closely with these teams, the management team, and other staff to monitor progress and adjust services, programs and resources as necessary.

Several of the objectives also call for survey to the public to gauge our progress. These surveys will be done at least annually. Other statistics will be gathered through program attendance, circulation numbers, database usage, etc...

Assessment of Facilities, Services, Technology, and Operations

BCPL is fortunate to be housed in two architecturally significant buildings. The Cleo Rogers Memorial Library in downtown Columbus was designed by I.M. Pei and was opened to the public in 1969. The Hope Branch library on the square in Hope was designed by Deborah Berke and completed in 1998.

However with world-class buildings often come world-class issues. Both buildings are starting to show their age and are in need of some improvements. Some highlights include:

Main

- Exterior brickwork on walls
- Children's terrace area (new doors, brick stairs))
- Revamp Children's program and collection areas
- Need more space for Technology equipment and Archives/Local History
- Revamp of the Red Room
- Revamp Teen area
- Furniture throughout the building
- More spaces for both collaboration and quiet study spaces
- Carpeting throughout the building
- Parking is a perennial issue

Hope

- Carpeting
- Furniture
- Revamp children's areas to create more activity spaces
- Programming spaces

The plaza at the Cleo Rogers Memorial Library was completely renovated in 2014 and the exterior landscaping was redesigned in 2015 (Front) and 2018 (Back). HVAC replacements were conducted at Hope in 2018 and the lighting at the Cleo Rogers Memorial Library was converted to LED in 2017.

BCPL also has a bookmobile service that has been serving the needs of patrons throughout the county since 1959. A new bookmobile was purchased in 2010/2011. While it currently serves our needs in, we will need to continually evaluation and plan for the future of this service.

In 2018, BCPL partnered with the Literacy Task Force to run the Book Express which primarily serves low income populations. A 1995 mini-bus was given to the library as part of the agreement but due to its age does have some mechanical issues. This will need to be watched and possibly a new vehicle purchased or obtained. In 2016, the bookmobile's circulation system was automated to allow integration into BCPL's current system.

Since we have added many offsite programs and increased our outreach significantly, our current vehicle fleet will need to be examined as we progress through the next few years. Currently we have a 2007 Dodge Ram pickup truck mainly used for maintenance activities and a 2015 Ford Transit Connect Wagon that serves outreach and delivery activities.

Currently the Cleo Rogers Memorial Library is open 69 hours per week with 3 hours on Sunday added from September to May. Our Hope Branch is open 55 hours per week and our Bookmobile operates a biweekly route from 8:30-5:00 from Monday-Thursday. BCPL will need to evaluate hours of operation at all locations to make sure we are properly serving patrons in the most efficient manner.

While BCPL has made significant strides in the area of technology, there is still work to be done. In 2016, BCPL contracted with Capira Technologies to create an app for our patrons. In 2018 we partnered with Thickstat, a local company, to create the first of its kind catalog searching and library account management using the Amazon Alexa technologies. However, our main website created in 2014 is in need of an overhaul especially as more and more of our resources are available digitally.

BCPL will be conducting a master planning process in 2019 that will help us get a better handle on our facility needs.

Financial Resources and Sustainability

As a local government entity, the library's main source of revenue is derived from property and local income taxes. In 2010, property tax caps were placed in the Indiana Constitution which limits the amount of tax paid. While this is great for the taxpayers' wallet, it has put a strain on the abilities of local governmental units to conduct business. Thankfully, Bartholomew County is a growing area and assessed valuation continues to increase thus reducing the effect of property tax caps on BCPL's budget.

However, we are not immune. Rising costs continue push against our annual operating budget. Digital resources are much more expensive than print resources. BCPL strives everyday to be intentional about the dollars spent and to be as efficient as possible with our resources.

Capital funds are also an issue. Large capital expenses in recent years (roof, HVAC, plaza renovation) have reduced our LIRF (Library Improvement Reserve Fund) to its lowest level in many years. Due to those rising operating costs, BCPL has not been able to replenish LIRF as we had before. The needed maintenance and renovation costs will need to be carefully consider and most likely staged in order to have enough funds. BCPL will also need to look at other sources for those funds such as gifts, grants, and possibly issuing debt.

Through good budgeting and careful spending, BCPL has been able to build up a decent reserve in our operating fund to allow us to not borrow as much from our LIRF funds in order to meet cash flow needs. This will allow us to free up LIRF dollars to be used for facility improvements and needs.

Collaboration

BCPL understands that we cannot achieve our greatest impact alone. It requires partnerships and collaboration with the many wonderful agencies and organizations in our community. Since the inception of the original plan, the library has forging new partnerships at every opportunity. We will continue to do so. Some examples of our partners include, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, Flat Rock-Hawcreek School Corporation, Columbus Area Arts Council, Anderson Community Center, Bartholomew County United Way, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Columbus Area Visitors Center, Bartholomew County Historical Society, Bartholomew County Genealogical Society, Family Self Sufficiency, area preschools, Sans Souci, Cambridge Square Apartments, Headstart, Yellow Trail Research Center, Exhibit Columbus, plus many, many more. Staff are also encouraged to sit on boards that relate to the work we do within the community.

BCPL also believes strongly in networking and learning from other public libraries around the state and country. Staff members regularly participate in roundtables and other opportunities for formal and informal networking. Staff also are active in the Indiana Library Federation through its boards, committees, and conferences.

Professional Development Strategy

Our staff are our great asset. BCPL recognizes this through many opportunities for professional development. Along with the aforementioned statewide networking and professional activities, BCPL sends many staff to several national and regional conferences. Staff have attended Public Library Association (PLA), Back-in-Circulation, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), Sirsi-Dynix User group (COSUGI) conferences and many others.

Just as we do for our patrons, we value life-long learning and education for our staff. We reimburse for library science courses through institutions such as Ivy Tech and Indiana University.

BCPL is fortunate to have an endowed gift fund (Frances Carr Memorial Fund) and a line item in our operating budget for all of these professional development opportunities.

Throughout the course of this strategic plan, staff training will be a high priority for us. We have committed to having at least one (ideally two) staff in-service days per year. Through this and other sessions throughout the year, we hope to provide training on readers' advisory, technology, HR issues, and much more.

We will be creating technology competencies for staff at all levels and catering training to each individual to help them achieve those competencies. As a result, we will be making progress towards those competencies a part of every staff member's annual performance evaluation.

Equipment Retention Schedule

Computers- 4 years from purchase date

Printers/Copiers- 5 years from purchase/lease date

Networking- 6 years from purchase date, or as needed to make use of emerging technologies

Other Items- As needed