

STRATEGIC PLAN, 2020-2024





INTRODUCTION

The Council Bluffs Public Library (CBPL) serves the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Council Bluffs is the most populous in Southwest Iowa (62,230 population) and is a primary city of the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area (933,316 population). CBPL delivers library services to the city as well as several adjacent communities. In FY 2018-19, approximately 134,043 customers visited the Library and accessed over 435,962 digital resources from Library databases, with 208,000 visits to the Library web site and online catalog.

Library customers enjoy a large and diverse collection of print and digital content, high-speed computer network that provides free Wi-Fi, public computers, a variety of software and hardware that ensure technology is available to the public for learning, personal growth and recreational use. Even as CBPL enjoys a high user satisfaction rate, it continues to build on its strengths. In 2018 after 20 years in the building it received a facelift. Restrooms were improved, Teen Central received a new service desk and new carpeting and painting enhanced the user experience.

While these improvements resulted in positive outcomes, the CBPL recognized the importance of anticipating and responding to environmental and social change, demographic shifts, evolving user needs and technological advancements to remain resilient, relevant, vital and sustainable moving forward. For this reason, the CBPL has developed this Strategic Plan. Over the course of a number of months, in consultation with Library staff and senior management, members of the Library Board of Trustees, Library Foundation and Friends of the Library, stakeholders, non-profit partners, local institutions and the community at large was involved in the planning process. This involvement yielded a number of key areas which serve as the basis for goals that the CBPL will strive to implement during the next 5 years.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

This strategic planning process was comprised of three phases. The first phase involved background research and assessment, as well as consultation with CBPL management, staff, key stakeholders and residents. Research included reviewing CBPL current statistical data, resources and services. Further information was gathered through online surveys, interviews, staff sessions and a community retreat. An overview of national public library trends with respect to service delivery, customer experience, programming and other factors was included in this research process. This extensive research together with the findings from the consultations resulted in the identification of key challenges currently facing the CBPL, as well as the development of goal areas and strategies.

During the second phase, these key strategic goals were presented to CBPL management, for review and revision. Once management accepted the goals, they were presented to the CB Board of Trustees for final approval. These strategic goals form the basis of this Strategic Plan with a framework to guide the Library over the near future.

The final phase consisted of the CBPL management team developing a set of key objectives and tasks that will serve as the basis for a continuously evolving implementation or staff work plan. This implementation plan will ensure that the strategic goal areas are addressed, realistic timelines are established, resources identified, and ownership of items is assigned to the individuals and/or groups required to carry out the strategic plan.



MISSION

The Council Bluffs Public Library enriches, informs and empowers our community.

VISION

The Council Bluffs Public Library is recognized as a primary community resource for educational support, self-directed learning, cultural development, advancing literacies, and building public prosperity and well-being.

VALUES (NEW)

The Council Bluffs Public Library:

- Offers superior customer experiences
- Encourages learning and discovery
- Is inclusive and provides access to all
- Cultivates collaboration and innovation
- Believes in the freedom to know
- Fosters a positive work environment
- Provides wise stewardship of public resources



GOALS & STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: ACCESS

Improve access and remove barriers to use of the Library's resources and services for all residents and remain flexible in response to changing community needs.

STRATEGIES:

- Explore options for free and expanded parking for Library users
- Expand collections and services to include access to Library resources outside of the downtown building (such as drop boxes, satellite sites, or locker/kiosk systems)
- Continue to offer new virtual programs, outreach and remote services in response to shifting needs in the community
- Expand use of social media for communication, programming, and delivery of other services
- Improve Library spaces to advance the welcoming environment of the Library
- Review and consider all policies and procedures, such as Library cards for all schoolchildren, to ensure easy access to Library resources
- Evolve and diversify staffing to better reflect the community

GOAL 2: MARKETING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Raise the visibility of the Library and its work across the Council Bluffs community

STRATEGIES:

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that explores targeted communication and messaging strategies to better promote Library programs and services
- Expand staffing resources in marketing and communications

- Create targeted awareness campaigns to introduce the Library to non-Library users and identified communities that lack familiarity with the Library
- Increase messaging about the value of libraries during the times of crisis and the important roles they play in recovery efforts
- Broaden awareness of the Library as a center for accurate health, financial and other essential community information
- Explore adding a high-profile event, and/or feature to the Library facility to garner community attention

GOAL 3: RESOURCES & SERVICES

Enhance services and resources to better meet community needs

STRATEGIES:

- Expand outreach services both virtually and physically by going to where community members meet and gather
- Foster the Library as a gathering and social place for individuals and groups, while ensuring the safety of staff and users
- Continue to evolve programming offerings and when they are offered to address resident's needs for all age levels
- Ensure technologies and digital services are up-to-date, acceptable levels of technology assistance are available for customers, and that IT support is adequate
- On an ongoing basis, right size all collections for efficiency, to enhance circulation, and to make space available for other purposes as needed
- Consider further adjustments to the facility, particularly an expanded makerspace area, a more welcoming lobby, and an enhanced children's area.

GOAL 4: INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS

Ensure that the Library has adequate resources and operates effectively in order to provide high-quality services

STRATEGIES:

- Conduct ongoing staff and leadership development and cross-training programs to strengthen the organization at all levels to better serve the public
- Continue to develop and enhance partnerships with educational, cultural and social services organizations, as well as the private sector, to support, enhance and expand the Library's programs, services and spaces
- Activate efforts to protect or restore funding during the COVID recovery process, and advance funding, from both public and private sources, to provide needed staffing levels and other resources
- Address real and perceived security concerns for users and staff through training, facilities review, communications, and partnerships with the City and others

LEADERSHIP TEAM

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STRATEGIES