

Putnam County Public Library

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2016 through 2020



Putnam County — Public Library —

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Mission Statement

The Putnam County Public Library strives to connect its users through the shared acquisition of knowledge, the cultivation of curiosity, and ongoing engagement with the world around them by promoting and supporting all forms of literacy, creativity, and cultural engagement.

Background

The Putnam County Public Library provides free and equitable access to information, services, and resources for all residents of and visitors to Putnam County. Located in downtown Greencastle, IN, PCPL opened its doors in 1903 with a newly-constructed Carnegie Library building at the corner of Vine and Walnut St. In 1995, a substantial expansion project was completed which added approximately 18,000 sq ft to the original library space. Today, the library maintains its original and expanded spaces with a single branch at 103 East Poplar Street while providing outreach and community services through materials delivery and off-site programming. A belief in the transformative power of literacy through the adoption of new technologies informs all aspects of PCPL's service models including collection development, programming and instruction, onsite and remote support, community partnerships, and early literacy initiatives such as the Imagination Library program. The library continues to partner with area schools, community organizations, local businesses, and its neighbor, DePauw University, in order to enhance and expand its services.

The population of the service area for PCPL (12 of 13 townships) is approximately 37,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2014 estimates).

Strategic Planning

The 2016-2019 Strategic Plan process began in August 2015 with the formation of the Strategic Plan Committee. A community survey was published and distributed via the library's website (with a corresponding print version made available at the library and distributed through the Outreach Services materials delivery program). 85 print surveys were completed and returned while 17 online surveys were submitted. A series of community forums were held by library administrators, staff, and trustees in Cloverdale, Bainbridge, and Greencastle respectively. The library board also formed a focus group in early 2015 consisting of community representatives, staff, and administrators, known as the Library Improvement Committee, to discuss some of the community's foremost concerns regarding literacy, education, and cultural engagement. In 2019 the library held internal meetings and discussions regarding strategic planning goals, as all departments were charged with outlining key areas for growth as well as reviewing the library's many successes and challenges in order to best identify how to address principal community needs. Community focus groups in 2019 also pointed to appropriate goals.

Library goals

Based on feedback from community surveys, public forums, and staff discussions, the following points represent the greatest areas of need for Putnam County residents with regard to library services:

- Literacy and education (including continuing adult education)
- Facility space assessment
- Outreach and collaboration throughout the county

- Expand programming
- Financial sustainability

Objectives and Action Steps

Objective: Literacy and education

- Promote new teen space for next-generation users
- Re-evaluate the current PALS program to enhance adult education
- Maintain ongoing collaboration with area schools
- Enhance online support with products such as Kanopy and Cypress
- Enhance general marketing efforts
 - Increase and improve social media presence
 - Increase local community presence of Library Director and Marketing Director
- Provide off-site help desk and technology classes
- Expand alternative forms of literacy such as board games and streaming services
- Focus on educational opportunities in programming
- Offer daily living skills such as cooking, gardening, resume writing and interviewing skills
- Actively promote the Friends' Imagination Library program
- Consider alternative book groups
- Consider enhanced reading programs for adults and children
- Aggressively promote the Overdrive card for digital devices
- Provide comprehensive information on job opportunities and county resources
- Increase onsite and online professional training for staff.
- Provide help guides on the library's website regarding library resources and services

Objective: Facility space assessment

- Identify space deficiencies to better meet the needs of today's library users
- Consider potential library expansion possibilities
- Consider possible out-building possibilities for MakerSpace
- Redefine existing public space(s) to focus on "doing" things at the library

Objective: Outreach and collaboration throughout the community

- Restore prison outreach education on library services, resume writing, interviewing, etc.
- Bring technology help desk to remote areas of the county.
- Participate in town events such as Farmer's Markets, celebrations, fairs, etc.
- Solidify a materials delivery model for Cloverdale, Russellville, and Bainbridge
- Formulate a pop-up model in providing programs throughout the county
- Demonstrate library digital resources at events throughout the county
- Seek opportunities to partner with schools on Local History education and support

Objective: Expand and improve library programming

- Solicit ideas for new and unique programming ideas
- Partner with organizations such as Depauw University, Castlemakers, and Conspire
- Attract student leaders for programming and library assessment input
- Explore after-school programs utilizing the teen space
- Develop interactive experiences for all patrons:
 - Develop a Makerspace program for adults and children
 - Offer a Library of Things for Circulation
 - Offer a/v production and distribution opportunities
 - Offer scanning of slides to digital
 - Offer VHS to digital
- Offer digital creativity lab(s) through programming and open use
- Broadcast library programs online for remote attendance
- Consider affordable options in the marketing of programs

Objective: Sustainability

- Aggressively seek grant opportunities---build department commitment
 - Library-participate in all PCCF initiatives and state grants opportunities
 - Local History-expand awareness of Cyril Johnson endowment
 - Adult Reference-create awareness of gift accounts supporting print material
 - Adult Education-use fundraisers to raise awareness of this new initiative
 - Youth Services-apply for grants supporting youth services initiatives
 - Imagination Library-apply for early education grants
 - Marketing-seek grants and sponsorships that support our goals
- Establish partnerships with County Council and the City, while maximizing funding
- Create a sponsorship packet to encourage donations to the library and the Friends
- Maintain the library's Amazon Smile wishlist account to acquire specific items
- Work with local businesses to garner sponsorships or donations of needed items for the library.

Operations, Facilities, and Services (as of December 2019)

Putnam County Public Library maintains a single branch located at 103 East Poplar Street, Greencastle IN 46135-0116. The building has 2 main entry points (Poplar Street and Walnut Street respectively) with ADA-compliant accessible entry at the Poplar Street doors. The library also maintains its own parking lot consisting of 46 spaces.

The main branch consists of 2 main floors of patron and staff space with a single set of stairs at each entrance to the library. A single elevator resides in the Circulation lobby near the Poplar Street entrance.

The library is open a total of 60 hours per week. Public service departments are fully-staffed and open during all hours of operation and include:

Circulation - 1 FTE (state-certified librarian), 3 PTE, 2 pages
Adult Services and Reference - 1 FTE (state-certified librarian), 3 PTE
Youth Services - 2 FTE (state-certified librarian), 1 PTE
Local History - 1 FTE (state-certified librarian), 3 PTE
Technology Support - 1 FTE information professional, 1 PTE
Outreach Services - 1 PTE materials delivery specialist
Marketing-1 FTE
Adult Programming-1 FTE
Adult Education-1 PTE
Technical Services - 1 FTE (state-certified librarian), 1 PTE

Technology

Technology plays a central role in the library's overall philosophy and service model. In 2014, a major renovation of the Children's Department saw the introduction of a new kind of library space at PCPL that encourages hands-on digital creativity, online cooperative work/play, and myriad digital literacy instruction and support opportunities through the use of new tools and new spaces. 2014 also saw a significant overhaul of the library's internal network infrastructure including an internet bandwidth increase from 10mbps to 70mbps. A new technology plan (adopted in October 2014) provides context for these upgrades and outlines a robust initiative aimed at integrating technology access, instruction, and support across all aspects of library services.

Patron computers and related technologies available to the public as of January 2016 are as follows:

- 24 onsite patron access computers (Lenovo, Dell, HP, and iMac)
- 4 fully-networked flat screen monitors
- 3 game consoles (Playstation 4, Playstation 3, Xbox One)
- 2 wireless projectors
- 11 touch screen laptops (technology mobile classroom cart)

Financial Resources and Sustainability

The library is funded through a combination of typical public library funds and reserves. The annual operating budget is proposed by the library in November and approved by the state in early January.

Operating Budget

- requisite staffing, materials and resources, operations, and facilities maintenance expenditures

Annual Gift Funds (a combination of discretionary and non-discretionary, 25 in total)

- new and existing collections
- new and existing programs
- professional development

LIRF (Library Improvement and Reserve Fund) and Rainy Day Fund

- renovations

- building repairs and improvements

Friends of the Library

- various programs and services not covered by the operating budget

Evaluation Process

Ongoing evaluation of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan by staff, administrators, and trustees will involve the following:

- semi-annual board-level reviews of existing programs and services as they relate to the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan
- monthly department and administrative reports evaluating actions steps pertaining to goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan
- community surveys focusing on new and existing programs and services
- statistical evaluation of library programs and services
 - monthly statistical reports on patronage, program attendance, circulation, and other relevant metrics
 - annual and comparable statistical reports on all aspects of library use
- annual or semi-annual board retreat sessions focusing on synthesizing usage data with evaluative information as they relate to the strategic plan.