Los Alamos County Library System

Strategic Plan 2020-2023

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LOS ALAMOS
Public Library System

Introduction

The intent of the strategic planning process was to provide the framework to ensure that library programs, resources and services meet community needs now and in the future, and to position the library to inspire and support community change. The strategic planning team consisted of the Library Manager and six Librarians representing all functional areas of the library. The planning team met several times for targeted discussions on critical issues, programming and outreach, marketing, and governance. During the planning process, the library engaged all library staff to identify our shared values.

The planning process was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which prevented the planning team from having face-to-face meetings with community members and curtailed some scheduled planning team discussions. However, the library plans to continue with these activities when circumstances allow. The library views strategic planning as an ongoing process and facilitates a periodic review process in its strategic initiatives. Future planning activities include community conversations and empathy mapping, and visioning by community members, library staff, and the Library Board.

In addition to input from the planning team, this plan incorporates information gathered from a number of sources including:

Review of Community Services Strategic Plan

The Los Alamos County Library System is a division of the Community Services Department and the Library Manager reports to the Community Services Director. In FY 2018-19, the Community Services Department identified core pillars of success for the department, mission, vision and values, and internal and external tactical goals. The Library's strategic plan has been developed to align with Community Service goals.

Review of Los Alamos County GAP Analysis

In December 2019, the Community Services Department of Los Alamos County commissioned a Health Services Gap Analysis to be conducted over the Winter of 2020. Gaps were determined for seven priority areas. The library strategic plan incorporates library responses to selected priority areas.

Programming Survey

The library conducted an online survey in October of 2019 to gather information from the community on programming interests.

Research Literature Scan

Supervisory/management staff performed a literature scan for current public library trends and innovations. This information informed the planning team's discussions.

Mission, Vision, Values Statement

Mission
The Library offers opportunities for our diverse regional community to learn, know, gather and grow by providing open and equal access to a variety of ideas and information through evolving technology and services.

Vision
Los Alamos County Library System will connect with community strengths and fulfill community educational, recreational, and cultural needs through our extraordinary collections, vibrant services, and dedicated staff.

Values
- Expertise
- Connection
- Innovation
- Equity
- Welcoming

Organizational History and Profile
The Los Alamos County Library System (LACLS) has provided continuous library service to the community since its informal beginnings in 1943, when seventy families each donated $5.00 to start a subscription library housed in the Big House of the former Boys Ranch School. The Library became free and open to all in 1945, when financial responsibility for its operations were taken over by Post Special Services. In 1951, when the Zia Company relinquished control, the Library became a bona fide public library and was officially named the Mesa Public Library, functioning as an independent corporation under contract to the Atomic Energy Commission to supply library services to the community. In 1953, the Library moved into the former commissary/cafeteria in the heart of the town site, where it remained until 1994 when it moved into the award winning facility designed by Antoine Predock. In 1985, the White Rock Branch Library was established, and the two libraries together became the Los Alamos County Library System. A new White Rock Branch Library was built in 2015.

Trends

The planning team identified a number of national trends that may affect library services. National trends to be aware of include:

- Artificial intelligence
- Greater focus on environmental sustainability
- Addiction issues
- STEAM
- Worker's rights movements
- Increasing polarization
- Focus on equity, diversity, inclusion
- Smart homes
- Library of things
- Healthcare reform
- DIY movement – return to practical arts

Critical Issues and Needs

COVID-19 will continue to affect the way that the library delivers services to the public. Until there is a widely available vaccine the library will need to appropriately tailor services, including collections and programming, to meet the changing situation. This entails continuing to think about a varied approach to everything the library offers so that it can be easily adapted. Particular issues to note include:

- Helping people connect both in the library and virtually
- Continuing to provide access to physical collections
- Continuing to provide programming virtually and in person
- Finding ways to provide Internet access/printing during building closures
- Increase to number of patrons using the library remotely
- Increase online learning and literacy support for school aged children
- Building partnerships with community resources such as Social Services
- Comprehensive communication strategy to inform the public about library services

Los Alamos County is seeing an increase in residents 65 and older. Many, upon retirement, are now choosing to stay in Los Alamos rather than moving elsewhere. Strategies selected to address this need include:

- Develop partnerships with Social Services, Senior Center and other organizations
- Explore new models for home delivery services
- Provide social connections and foster a sense of belonging and purpose

As Los Alamos National Lab continues to hire new employees the library will see an increase in the number of new patrons who are residents of Los Alamos County as well as those who reside in other communities. Over 7,000 people commute to Los Alamos for work on a daily basis and the children of many of these commuters attend school in Los Alamos. Strategies selected to address this need include:

- Provide social connections and foster a sense of belonging and purpose
- Partner with the schools and other organizations to provide afterschool activities, homework and online learning support

The number of young adults without children is growing in the community. Strategies selected to address this need include:
- Provide social connections and foster a sense of belonging
- Engage with the community and provide programming at a variety of community locations

Los Alamos County is increasing efforts to attract tourists to the area by branding Los Alamos as a gateway to three national parks. Strategies selected to address this need include:
- Provide information on Los Alamos County activities and amenities
- Provide technology access to visitors

Mental health issues related to stress and anxiety are concerning in the community. High work and academic performance expectations coupled with the toll of acclimation experienced by trailing spouses and children was frequently cited as resulting in social isolation and lack of systems of support. Strategies selected to address this need include:
- Develop partnerships with Social Services and other organizations
- Provide social connections and foster a sense of belonging and purpose

Los Alamos County has a silent but sizeable 'Near Poor' Population with a high subgroup of females that are over 75 years of age. The atypical demographics of an affluent, highly educated population fosters stigma for the poor or working poor. This results in an unawareness of poverty status and/or a reticence to access resources for assistance as well as a lack of knowledge about available resources and issues identifying appropriate services. Strategies selected to address this need include:
- Develop partnerships with Social Services, Senior Center and other organizations
- Address issues of equity and the digital divide

Strategic Goals and Subgoals (2020 – 2023)

1. **Offer innovative and diverse programming, services and resources for youth, families, and adults that meet their evolving needs (to be delivered in the library or where they are)**
    1.1. Assure that we meet the needs of our community and that all programs provide the highest level of service to our patrons.
    1.2. Ensure that appropriate metrics and evaluation tools are used to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of community engagement and programs
    1.3. Deliver exceptional point-of-need customer service
    1.4. Support the shift from traditional to emerging services
    1.5. Provide social connections and foster a sense of belonging for all age groups, but with a special emphasis on new community members, commuters, growing senior population, tweens and teens.
    1.6. Increase the reach, diversity, and accessibility of programming for all age groups
2. **Develop partnerships with other CSD divisions, county departments and other community organizations in order to build mutually beneficial connections, leverage resources and increase collaboration and coordination to meet identified community needs.**
    2.1 Support the shift from a library-centered to community-centered approach
    2.2 Embed librarians in the community and organizations outside the library's walls
3. **Provide a safe, comfortable, accessible space that meets the technological and physical demands of a 21st century library.**
    3.1 Develop facility responses that provide flexible use of space and support the growth and development of the community
4. **Keep technology up to date for the efficiency and convenience of patrons and staff and provide both mainstream and emerging technologies to community members that promote equity and address the digital divide.**
    4.1 Ensure access to technology during closures due to the COVID pandemic and other potential disruptions in library service
    4.2 Develop and implement contactless library services
5. **Attract and retain qualified and diverse, paid and volunteer staff for all services and activities.**
    5.1 Improve organizational resilience and capacity for innovation within the library so that we can quickly and efficiently adapt library services to any changing situation.
    5.2 Promote a positive workplace and align organizational culture with organizational values including those of inclusion and diversity
    5.3 Offer a vibrant staff development and training enterprise that promotes continuous learning
    5.4 Cultivate effective internal communication systems
    5.5 Create a culture of safety
    5.6 Foster a holistic view of the library that is community focused
6. **Keep collection up to date; diverse in subjects, formats, and experiences; responsive to community needs; and attractive.**
    6.1 Achieve an optimal balance of print and digital materials for the community
    6.2 Ensure that access to collections is quickly adaptable to changing external circumstances
7. **Produce effective and centralized marketing to engage the community in library events and services and to increase awareness that the library is an essential resource for individuals and the community.**

7.1 Increase awareness of the full range of library services, especially electronic resources

7.2 Increase the use of the library by young adults, newcomers, and underserved populations

8. **Acquire stable, broad-based, financial and non-financial resources to support the programs and growth envisioned in this strategic plan.**

   8.1 Be fiscally responsible

   8.2 Encourage and promote environmental sustainability

   8.3 Identify funding needs and diversify funding base

9. **The library will have knowledgeable, diverse, engaged boards and county leadership whose governance, advisory, and support roles help the achievement of the Library's mission and vision and maintain a high level of public trust**

   9.1 Board Training: Increase the advisory capacity of the boards to assist with policy setting and advocacy

   9.2 Ensure the board is not only active and engaged but effective