CUMBERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Cumberland, Rhode Island

Long Range Plan

2022 - 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

The Cumberland Public Library is committed to serving the changing needs of our community by providing a gateway to free sources of knowledge, information and entertainment both within and beyond our walls.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A free flow of ideas is necessary to a democratic society so that citizens may make informed choices about their personal lives, their group activities and associations, and their government.

Because a vibrant, informed community ensures the future, the Library serves by collecting and organizing materials, offering reader's advisory service and programs of interest to specific groups, and reference and referral assistance.

The Library believes in the freedom to learn, read and discover and serves all people without regard for age, sexual orientation and/or gender, religious or ethnic background, political affiliation, educational ability or economic status.

The Library promotes literacy and a love of reading, but adapts and innovates to stay relevant to patrons' changing needs and interests. We are a learning organization and invest in our staff, technology, and infrastructure to improve service.

The Library enriches lives by fostering lifelong learning and by ensuring that every member of the community has access to a vast array of ideas and information.

COMMUNITY NEEDS STATEMENT

The 2020 census shows a population of 36,405. Roughly half of Cumberland's population has an active library card.Library cards are free to RI residents and give card holders access to the collections and services in all 52 library systems in the state. We feel that the library is serving
the community's need for books and other physical materials, but progress needs to be made to fill their needs for digital materials. According to *US News and World Reports*, RI is ranked no. 4 in broadband access for its residents. This coupled with the decrease in costs for personal electronics means that Cumberland residents are able to access digital materials, books, movies, and information, from home instead of utilizing the physical library building. The temporary closing of libraries during the height of the pandemic led more patrons to discover our digital collections. Ocean State Libraries is on track to circulate 1.25 million digital items in 2022, more even then in 2020. The library needs to meet the demand for digital materials through streaming content, eZone catalog, and databases. This means there is less demand for the use of library computers. Our new wifi access points allow us to keep track of wifi use. The fact that usage stats increase each month, supports this conclusion.

While the use of digital resources increases, we learn from our library consortium that the number of physical checkouts decreases each year. Patrons are still using the library from home, but visits to the building decrease. In order to counteract this trend, the library must create other reasons for patrons to visit. To this end, library staff design a variety of programs for all ages. Our seven meeting rooms are open, not only to library programs and town meetings, but to local community groups and non-profits outside of Cumberland. There has been an increase in requests for use of the meeting rooms and quiet study rooms. The growing trend of online college degrees, means there is a need for study areas and proctoring of exams. Our three quiet study areas are always in use for exam study and for tutoring. There is a need for more such spaces.

The Library is housed in a former monastery, built in the early 1900's. While this space is mostly meeting rooms, restrooms and offices, it does require careful caretaking to not only maintain original features from the Monastery, but to keep it useable. The other half of the Library is an addition built in 2000. Compared to the Monastery half, this is relatively new, but it is showing signs of wear and needs to be maintained. Patrons coming to the Library expect a clean, welcoming space. Grants have enabled us to replace information desks and carpeting on the first and second floors, expand the Teen Center and order additional shelving. Future projects include more carpet replacement, painting and HVAC upgrades and replacements.

To summarize, while public libraries are facing decreases in physical circulation and therefore physical use of the space, the Cumberland Public Library needs to find new services.

I. Goal – To provide community awareness of Library services.

    a. Objective - Offer a wider variety of programs to patrons of all ages and economic status utilizing both staff and outside performers.

        i. Action step – Increase our fiscal year funding request for programs by $300.00 for each of the next four years.

        ii. Action step - Increase staff hours in departments that provide the majority of their own programs

            1. Action step – Increase the hours of the Part-time Children's Assistants in FY 24 if funds do not become available to accomplish sooner.

            2. Action step – counteract the lack of response to part-time openings by offering a full-time position on the second floor as a Reference/Homebound position.

            3. Create a full-time Teen Assistant position to allow for better programming and coverage of the Teen Center.

Key outcomes - The children's department does much of their own programming so adding a staffer will ease the load. Replacing two part-time staff positions with a full-time position will hopefully increase applicants and so be able to hire a better fit.

    b. Objective - Spread of awareness of library services and programs

        i. Action step – Increase followers on Facebook to 4,500 by December 2025. Facebook seems to be one of the best ways people contact us for information about the library and about our programs.

        ii. Action step – Explore creating a Facebook group to create an online book club.

        iii. Action step – Promote programs in traditional ways such as newspapers, signage and library newsletter.

        iv. Action step – visit elementary schools each year

        v. Action step – Work with school superintendent and principals to have every kindergarten class visit the library at the start of each school year.

        vi. Action step – work with Senior Center to provide programming for seniors.

        vii. Action step – Add a library paraprofessional as an Outreach Coordinator to work with outside groups such as the Senior Center and the area assistive living facilities to provide services and programs.

Key outcomes – Library programs become more varied. Programs increase by 5% each year. Program attendance increases by 10%.

II. Goal – To provide a diverse, relevant collection of both up-to-date resources and materials of enduring value for the education and enjoyment of the community.

    a. Objective - Provide library patrons with access to new technologies

        i. Action step – Seek one grant per year to purchase new technologies for in-house use or circulation. ARPA Funds and legislative grants have helped us with this.

        ii. Action step – Introduce non-traditional items to the collection

similar to the telescope and Roku. Continue to add to the Library of Things such as a DVD player, stud finder or car code diagnostic tool.

      iii. Action step – Increase funding to digital resources such as eZone and Hoopla by 5% each year for all reading levels.

      iv. Action step – Continually review new databases and/or online resources for patrons.

Key outcomes - Patrons will have the ability to use and experience new technologies without incurring the expense. The Library becomes a center for innovation and learning.

b. Objective - Support STEM education through science, coding and robotics programs for grades K – 5.

      i. Action step – Seek grants to purchase materials for STEM programming

      ii. Action step – Send Library staff, if needed, to learn STEM programming.

      iii. Action step – Hire outside expertise to offer STEM programs periodically throughout the year.

      iv. Action step – add video tutorials to the website to help patrons with services such as Overdrive.

Key outcomes – Attendance at library programs increases by 5% by December 2024. Circulation of physical materials increases by 5% by December 2024.

III. Goal – To maintain the historic value and beauty of the Library building while exploring ways to reduce the building's impact on the environment

a. Objective - Expand green initiatives for the library building.

      i. Action step – Research and seek funding for solar power.

      ii. Action step – Electric charging station for electric cars in the library parking lot.

Key outcomes - The Library is able to actually reduce its electric bill by 2024.

b. Objective – Preserve Monastery half of building

      i. Action step – Repoint windows in original Monastery building using town funds.

      ii. Action step – Seek preservation grants to repair parts of original Monastery building not funded by town.

Key outcomes – The historic Monastery building is a much loved part of the town's history. Maintaining the original building will gain support from town residents.

IV. Goal – Library staff will maintain the highest level of customer service and expertise.

a. Objective - Develop, encourage, and sustain expertise, skill, commitment, in Library Staff.

      i. Action step – Add an additional Teen Desk or relocate the current desk for more visibility. While the current desk has a great view of the Teen Center, it is hard to see as patrons enter the space.

      ii. Action step – Provide adequate funding and opportunity for Library

staff to attend professional conferences

iii. Action step – Provide adequate funding and opportunity for Library staff to attend webinars/classes related to their work

iv. Action step – Provide adequate funding and opportunity for Library staff to attend lectures/conferences/webinars, etc. that will expand their knowledge into new areas

v. Action step – Create a survey designed to gauge patron satisfaction with library services.

      b. Objective – Evaluate each employee annually
          i. Action step – Evaluations should include an opportunity for staff feedback, goals discussion and mentoring.
     Key outcomes - Periodic surveys of library patrons will show increased satisfaction with library operations.

A PLAN FOR EVALUATION

Every six months, the Library Administration and department heads will review the Long Range Plan at one of their monthly staff meetings to determine whether the goals and objectives set forth in the time line are being met by the dates set forth in the plan.

Additionally, each departmental supervisor (e.g. Children's Services Coordinator, Teen Services Coordinator, Reference Services Coordinator, Adult Services Librarian, Circulation Supervisor, etc.) shall be required to construct a timeline of the Goals and Objectives which pertain to the collections, resources, programs and/or services offered by their particular department within the library. At the time of their Annual Evaluation each year, the supervisor will review with the Library Director the progress they have made towards achieving their department's respective goals and objectives.

If any goal or objective has not been met according to schedule, a determination will be made whether that objective is still relevant. As mentioned in the Community Assessment portion of this document, the patrons' needs are ever evolving and changing, and the library must be flexible enough to adapt along with them.

If the goal or objective is still deemed relevant, then an assessment will be made as to why the objective was not achieved according to plan, and the administration—with the help of the departmental supervisor—will develop strategies and propose budgetary resources to achieve implementation within a timely and cost-effective manner.

If the objective is no longer relevant or possible—whether due to changing needs, emerging technologies, or budgetary constraints—an assessment will be made as to whether it should be amended, assigned a new timeline, or simply deleted from the plan. The Long Range Plan will then be revised to reflect the changing needs of the community and/or the library's ability to achieve its goals.

At the same time, the Administrative team (consisting of all of the departmental supervisors as well as administrative staff) will determine whether the staff or the Board of Trustees have identified any new goals or objectives over the prior twelve months which should be added to the plan. If so, a timeline for these objectives shall be inserted into the revised plan.

A report will be submitted to the Library Trustees of the prior year's successes and failures/disappointments, with recommendations for proposed strategies to address any objectives that were not achieved within the proposed timeline and/or to reassess its value and to discard/modify/add any particular objectives from/to our plan.

Adopted Library Board of Trustees 8/22/2022