Iowa City Public Library Strategic Plan (FY24-FY26)

6.14.2023

Please note: Example tactics are included to illustrate how goals, objectives, and strategies connect to day-to-day work. Since tactics are essentially a work plan, they are typically excluded from public-facing communications, and include more library jargon and references to library practices than goals, objectives, or strategies. There are many tactics not included here, and more will be developed throughout the life of the plan.

Goal: Access *We provide equitable opportunities for all people to connect with the resources and services they need and want.*		
Objectives	Strategies	*Example Tactics*
Connect people with resources offered by the library and with other essential services within the community	Prioritize historically underserved people, communities, and neighborhoods when developing new services	*Assess the feasibility of book returns and book vending machines in neighborhoods with limited transit options*
	Collaborate with local organizations to invite more people to the library and bring library services to their locations	*Offer a walking tour of local collections open to the public and a guide that provides information on accessing these resources*
	Promote City offerings and incorporate the City's strategic initiatives in library service design	*Create New Resident Welcome Kits for newcomers to Iowa City including suggestions of things to do in the community and information on City services*
Ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to all library services	Continue to identify and reduce barriers to program participation	*Evaluate community interest in Sensory Accessible browsing times*
		Establish active list of local ASL, French, Swahili, Arabic, etc. interpreters available to contract with the library
	Maintain a collection that represents diverse experiences, opinions, and beliefs	*Evaluate current collections in world languages*

Maintain welcoming, accessible, and sustainable spaces and services	Evaluate the functionality, condition, and usability of public and staff spaces	*Explore costs related to establishing gender neutral restrooms*
		Complete an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment of public and staff spaces
		Reduce and clarify signage in public and staff spaces
		Evaluate the accessibility of how materials are organized
	Initiate Service Continuity Planning to ensure the library can deliver essential services during disruptions	*Establish a Service Continuity Planning team*
		Develop a risk management strategy that includes a "Risk Registry" – a list of potential threats along with impact and likelihood of occurrence
		Develop a Disaster Recovery Plan for how the library will respond to catastrophic events (building on re-opening strategies)

Goal: Communication

We effectively share information and seek feedback from our community.

Objectives	Strategies	*Example Tactics*
Tell the library's story in accessible and diverse ways	Create and implement an external communications plan	*Update Library Style Guide*
	Increase resources allocated to communications	*Complete a time-on-task study to better understand the workflow in Communications*
	Plan regular updates about library services for local elected officials	*Schedule quarterly County Supervisor updates*
		Submit library-related proclamations to City Council (National Library Week, etc.)
Engage both library users and non-users in conversation about what they need and want from the library	Provide opportunities for feedback outside of traditional library spaces	*Offer "listening posts" at locations throughout the community focused on current and future library services*
	Increase channels for library patron feedback in the library	*Add specific requests for feedback in the library, like QR codes that link to an online suggestion form and comment cards in study rooms*
		Communicate how patron feedback influences library services
Connect library staff with the information they need	Create and implement an internal communications plan	*Establish expectations for sharing departmental updates*
		Establish a library-wide community agreement
	Design a training program around current and emerging communication tools	*Work with the Communications Committee to identify training opportunities related to communication expectations*

Goal: Education *We champion lifelong learning.*		
Objectives	Strategies	*Example Tactics*
Provide services that meet current and emerging community needs	Balance core technology access and education with training on new technologies and tools	*Update collaboration and presentation technology in Meeting Room E*
	Seek public input on current programming	*Create a tool for the public to suggest a public program or collaboration with the library*
	Highlight programs and practices that help the environment and support sustainability	*Investigate environmental sustainability programs and certifications for public libraries*
		Identify partnerships that focus on sustainable transportation and reducing the library's carbon footprint
Create opportunities for the community to learn about issues affecting the library	Create meaningful, accessible connections between library services and the library's values	*Emphasize intellectual freedom, eBook and online audiobook limitations, and library funding in communications*
	Identify opportunities for people to advocate for the library	*Include information about Library Board, City Council and Johnson County Board of Supervisors meetings on event calendars, with links to detailed steps for making public comments*

Goal: Staff Wellbeing		
We recognize that staff are our greatest resource, and celebrate that each employee has distinct skills, needs, and aspirations.		
Objectives	Strategies	*Example Tactics*
Ensure policies, workflows, and staff spaces are up-to-date, inclusive, sustainable, and make the most of our team's skills and abilities	Support a culture of balance to prevent staff burnout	*Create a staff Automation Committee to investigate opportunities for automation of library processes*
		Evaluate hours on desk
		Document and celebrate the end of initiatives and projects
		Include specific, explicit language about consequences for harassing staff in appropriate policies
	Continue to explore how social work professionals could impact library services and culture	*Engage regional libraries in conversation about their experiences with embedded social workers*
		Establish a data-collection tool for social service-related questions at library service points
	Evaluate current library organizational structure	*Assess public service desk staffing model*
	Enhance support for staff to use sustainable transportation for work-related travel	*Work with City of Iowa City transit and the Climate Action and Outreach department to identify sustainable in-town travel options*
		Explore indoor bicycle parking for staff
Support staff growth by investing in professional development and ongoing education opportunities	Offer a variety of skill-building opportunities for staff, both internally and externally	*Implement an internal training framework for peer-led, informal skill sharing*

	Develop mentorship and customized learning paths for staff interested in specific areas of knowledge, such as library finance management, programming, project management, and more	*Create internal "job shadowing" opportunities for staff to learn about management and leadership positions in the library*
	Design and implement training on library values, first amendment rights, and patron privacy for staff, trustees, and Friends Foundation board members	*Offer training on effective responses to citizen "audits"*