

La Porte County Public Library Strategic Plan 2022-2024

Adopted by the
La Porte County Public Library Board of Trustees
on

10/28/2021

Strategic Plan Facilitators:
Midwest Collaborative for Library Services

This document is available online at laportelibrary.org

Acknowledgments

The development of the strategic plan took many hours and the dedicated effort of many people. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who helped make this plan a reality.

- The Library staff for their contributions to the process, and who shared our challenges, successes and their visions for the future of the library.
- The members of the Library Board of Trustees for their participation and support of the process.
- The members of the Strategic Planning Committee for their time and participation in our long yet inspiring planning meetings.
- The community leaders who attended Community Conversations and shared their aspirations for the community.

Fonda Owens, Library Director

Library Board of Trustees

Karen Ellison, President
Michelle Shirk, Vice President
Corey Campbell, Secretary
Dave Decker
Marie Gilliland
Dara Jeffries
Scott Siefker

Strategic Planning Committee

Earl Adams
Daphne Bechrakis
Dania Bocanegra
De Burke
Corey Campbell
James Conlin
Greg Coulter
Kyleen Fuller
Aimee Meier
Grace Murphy
Fonda Owens, Director
Michelle Shirk
Sis Thompson
Kyla Walker
Jeanene Wolf

Executive Summary

To guide this effort, the LPCPL Board of Trustees elected to work with consultants at the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services of Lansing, MI to facilitate a strengths-based strategic planning process that would seek the input of the staff in aligning library services with the aspirations and needs of the community. Based on the work of Appreciative Inquiry, the staff interviewed each other, and were asked to share high-point stories of times they have really enjoyed their work at the library and felt like they were having a positive impact on the lives of customers and the vitality of the community. They were also asked what they value most about the La Porte County Public Library as an organization, and what the library already does well and should continue to do more of. Finally, they were asked to dream on behalf of the library, and to share possibilities they can see for the library that don't exist now, as well as three wishes for the library.

The Strategic Planning Committee recommended that the Library Board adopt five strategic focus areas for the period 2022-2024. The focus areas are:

FOCUS AREA 1: CENTER OF POSSIBILITIES

We will become an essential and enduring resource for life-long learning in our community.

FOCUS AREA 2: COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

We will strive to be ever more enmeshed in the life of our community.

FOCUS AREA 3: TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

We will increase access to and use of technology within the La Porte community.

FOCUS AREA 4: EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

We will use an equity, diversity, & inclusion lens to examine our organization and decisions at all levels.

FOCUS AREA 5: INTENTIONAL DECISION-MAKING

We will be intentional in creating, planning, implementing, evaluating, and ending programs and services.

La Porte County Public Library

MISSION (previously established, no changes)

La Porte County Public Library is the center of community life with a focus on reading, lifelong learning and public involvement.

VISION

La Porte County Public Library is a trusted, welcoming, and relevant partner in the success of our community. We champion learning and growth at every stage of life by offering equitable access to opportunities, resources, and services that help everyone be the best versions of themselves.

CORE VALUES

Leaders in Innovation

We meet the needs of our community through forward-thinking service development and delivery.

Welcoming Spaces

We provide spaces that are accessible and inviting.

Advocates for Equitable Access

We actively pursue inclusiveness.

Exceptional Internal Culture

We value our staff, sharing expertise, making impact, and developing relationships with each other and with members of our community.

Operational Integrity

We believe in responsible and accountable business practices and facilities upkeep.

Excellent Customer Service

We are committed to delivering high-quality, responsive service to our community.

KEY STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS

Center of Possibilities

We will become an essential and enduring resource for life-long learning in our community.

- Create a group of intergenerational experts to support learning in our community.
- Create ease of access that makes independent use of library services achievable to all.
- Offer programs, services, collections, and spaces that position the Library at the center of the community.

Community Integration

We will strive to be ever more enmeshed in the life of our community.

- Increase awareness of what the Library offers to the community.
- Form and nurture partnerships to create ownership and collaboration.
- Be a more visible and valuable presence in our community.

Technology Access

We will increase access to and use of technology within the La Porte community.

- Deepen technology expertise/competency across the entire LPCPL staff.
- Increase the usability of Library technology for all.
- Establish the Library as a trusted resource for technological learning and opportunities.

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

We will use an equity, diversity, & inclusion lens to examine our organization and decisions at all levels.

- Commit to an internal organizational culture that insists upon equity, diversity, and inclusion as markers of excellence.
- Create experiences where everyone who engages with the Library's programs, services, collections, or facilities can both see themselves reflected and gain new insights into others different than them.
- Become leaders in the La Porte community by embracing a leadership role in our community's equity, diversity, and inclusion journey and evolution.

Intentional Decision-Making

We will be intentional in creating, planning, implementing, evaluating, and ending programs and services.

- Create/clarify a framework for staff decision-making and communicate it clearly to all staff.
- Create a process to use in deciding to end programs and services while still providing a "yes" experience, allowing for sustainability and growth.
- Evaluate our current software and hardware tools and use them to optimize effectiveness and efficiencies in workflows.

Focus Area 1: Center of Possibilities

We will become an essential and enduring resource for life-long learning in our community.

Goal 1: Create a group of intergenerational experts to support learning in our community.

Objectives:

- Increase the number of programs with expert presenters
- Community partners feel valued by the Library
- Volunteers are more appropriately matched to tasks
- 75% of library users will say they learned something new from library programs or resources each year
- 75% of library users say they found the help they were looking for/they needed

Goal 2: Create ease of access that makes independent use of library services achievable to all.

Objectives:

- Accessibility audits of online and at physical locations will be conducted and the information learned there will be used to improve accessibility.
- Increased use of self-guided learning tutorials
- Community members will say they can access our services independently

Goal 3: Offer programs, services, collections, and spaces that position the Library at the center of the community.

Objectives:

- 85% of survey respondents indicate that the service/resources they use(d) is essential to their life
- Community survey indicates that LPCPL is in the top 3 listed “Key La Porte County Resources”
- Increased use of services (i.e.: reference desk) and collections (i.e.: databases)
- 85% of survey respondents answer, “Yes” to the statement, “LPCPL is where I can go to learn anything and everything!”

Focus Area 2: Community Integration

We will strive to be ever more enmeshed in the life of our community.

Goal 1: Increase awareness of what the Library offers to the community.

Objectives:

- Increase by 50% number of Library staff will be utilized by outside groups to share their expertise
- Increased use of library facilities as place to meet by 50%
- Survey participants can list at least five different services the Library offers

Goal 2: Form and nurture partnerships to create ownership and collaboration.

Objectives:

- At least 2 Library services have been integrated into the community in a new way
- Increased cross-promotion with other organizations each year
- At least 2 new partnerships formed each year with organizations LPCPL has never partnered with before

Goal 3: Be a more visible and valuable presence in our community.

Objectives:

- More community members will use the Library
- Branding/StyleGuide will be implemented and used by staff at all levels
- 85% surveyed will say the Library is one of the most valuable organizations in the community
- Other organizations will seek out Library staff for expertise

Focus Area 3: Technology Access

We will increase access to and use of technology within the La Porte community.

Goal 1: Deepen technology expertise/competency across the entire LPCPL staff.

Objectives:

- All staff will participate in at least 3 tech competency training(s) per year
- Staff will report feeling more able to help customers who approached them
- Staff survey will show fewer knowledge gaps each year
- Library users will report finding the help they need in the first staff member they approached (either directly or through that staff person connecting them to the right person to help them)

Goal 2: Increase the usability of Library technology for all.

Objectives:

- Use of tech resources increased by 25%
- Increase independent Makerspace use by 100% (double current use)
- Increase circulation of Library of Things by 50%
- Increase the # of in-person tech classes (non-Makerspace) by 50%
- Surveys will indicate that 75% or higher of Library users found instructions for technology to be clear and user-friendly

Goal 3: Establish the Library as a trusted resource for technological learning and opportunities.

Objectives:

- Increase tech class attendance by 50%
- Decreased digital divide among community members
- Community members have “skilled up” and will report an improved quality of life
- Community surveys will indicate that 50% of survey participants consider the Library to be one of the top two community resources for tech learning and/or opportunities

Focus Area 4: Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

We will use an equity, diversity, & inclusion lens to examine our organization and decisions at all levels.

Goal 1: Commit to an internal organizational culture that insists upon equity, diversity, and inclusion as markers of excellence.

Objectives:

- Increased diversity among staff and volunteers
- When asked, 100% of staff will be able to clearly define what equity, diversity, and inclusion mean at La Porte County Public Library and give real-life examples of how they've seen the terms put into action with the library organization.

Goal 2: Create experiences where everyone who engages with the Library can see themselves reflected and gain new insights into others different than themselves.

Objectives:

- Increased diversity (in multiple ways) among our customers
- Serving underserved populations increased by 30%
- Library customers recognize and appreciate the diverse communities within La Porte County

- Programs/classes/events/resources reflect the diversity of our communities
- >95% of those who visited the Library said they felt welcome

Goal 3: Become leaders in the La Porte community by embracing a leadership role in our community’s equity, diversity, and inclusion journey.

Objectives:

- 12 opportunities offered for conversations/focus groups, specifically about equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- 3 new or deepened partnerships with other community organizations also trying to bring attention to EDI issues
- Community members identify us as a leader toward greater equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility

Focus Area 5: Intentional Decision-Making

We will be intentional in creating, planning, implementing, evaluating, and ending programs and services, both internal and external.

Goal 1: Create/clarify a framework for staff decision-making and communicate it clearly to all staff.

Objectives:

- Staff spend 80% of their time on their focus areas and better prioritize how to spend their time
- Staff feel empowered to make decisions that are in both their own interest and align with Library goals
- Customers receive better service because they are accurately directed to staff members who can best help them because staff have a clear understanding of their and other staff role and focus areas.
- Survey participants can identify at least a baseline awareness of library services

Goal 2: Create a process to use in deciding to end programs and services while still providing a “yes” experience, allowing for sustainability and growth.

Objectives:

- Staff feel a sustainable workflow balance has been maintained by considering what programs/services must be eliminated or adapted before beginning new offerings
- Staff and customers feel their perspective was considered in Library decision-making
- Whether the number of programs and services increases, stays the same, or decreases, Library users will indicate an increase in *impact* of existing programs and services each year

Goal 3: Evaluate our current software and hardware tools and use them to optimize effectiveness and efficiencies in workflows.

Objectives:

- Staff report being happier with software tools available to them
- Staff report a 20% increase in their own perceived productivity
- Managers report a 20% increase in perceived departmental work satisfaction and productivity
- Staff feel able to identify where they have room for personalization and feel empowered to improve their own workflows

Statement of Long-Range Plan Compliance with Indiana Public Library Standards

A. Statement of Community Needs and Goals

- a) A fifteen-person Strategic Planning Committee was assembled, which included representatives from the Library Board, Library Staff, and three community members.
- b) At an initial, virtual meeting with the consultants on March 30, 2021, the Library Director and five key staff leaders were introduced to the planning process that would be used, including an overview of Appreciative Inquiry, the SOAR method, and Appreciative Paired Interviews. Attendees were sent into Zoom breakout rooms in pairs, to conduct interviews of each other. The interview data was entered into a Google form, and included in the Staff Engagement data.
- c) All staff were then invited to attend a virtual Staff Engagement meeting on April 15. Those who attended were given an overview of the Appreciative Interview process and why it was being used, as well as instructions and tips for participation. They were then sent into Zoom breakout rooms in pairs to conduct interviews. The data was again entered into a Google form, and included in the Staff Engagement Report. Twenty staff members participated in the interviews that day.
- d) The Appreciative Inquiry overview and interview instructions were recorded during the session and the video, along with typed instructions and a link to the Google Interview Form and Summary Form, were sent out by LPCPL to staff unable to attend the live session. Those staff who wanted to participate were paired up by LPCPL and asked to complete the forms by April 23, 2021. An additional 17 staff members completed the interviews, bringing the total staff members who added their input to the process to 43.
- e) MCLS consultants compiled the information from all 43 interviews to identify themes. This information was used to create a “Staff Engagement Report” to summarize the public knowledge that was gathered. See Appendix B.

B. An assessment of facilities, services, technology, and operations

- a) Throughout the planning process, committee members and staff considered the facilities, services, technology and operations of the library. During the staff Operational Retreat, staff specifically were asked to assess the organizational competencies that would need to be addressed to achieve the key service responses. Specifically, they were asked to address staffing, funding, policies, technology, facilities, collections, and potential partners.

- C. Measurable objectives and service responses to the community's needs and goals.
 - a. Five key strategic directions (service responses) were identified to address community needs and goals. See Page 8.
 - b. A mission statement was carried over and a vision statement was developed to specify the benefits that the residents in the library district are expected to receive from the service responses. See Page 8.
 - c. Each service response has one or more goals.
 - d. Each goal includes at least two measurable objectives.
 - e. Each goal includes at least two (usually more) potential activities/strategies/initiatives to assist the library in accomplishing the goal and measurable objectives.
 - f. A written communication plan was developed to inform community residents of the library's plans to serve them. See Appendix G.

- D. An implementation plan has been developed to ensure the plan is put into action and clearly communicate to the staff who is responsible for what.

- E. An ongoing annual evaluation process has been developed and will include a combination of both outputs and outcomes.

- F. Financial resources and sustainability.

- G. Technology Equipment Replacement Schedule.

- H. Professional Development Strategy.

- I. Collaboration with other public libraries and community partners.

Implementation Plan

The La Porte County Public Library has created an Implementation Plan in order to turn the strategic plan into action and help the Library accomplish the strategic plan's goals and objectives.

This plan outlines the potential activities, roles and responsibilities, and decisions necessary to turn the strategic plan into reality. Mapping out a strategic plan this way brings the strategy to life and drives success. It also ensures more buy-in from stakeholders and guidance so that everyone involved knows what, when, and who will be initiating potential projects.

The La Porte County Public Library will review this document each year to incorporate the ever-changing opportunities for the Library, and the needs and interests of the community.

Evaluation/Measurement Plan

The La Porte County Public Library will collect and monitor data at regular intervals in order to find out how it is progressing or developing in terms of the goals identified in the strategic plan. This monitoring will provide the Library with the information needed to continually refine and enhance activities to reflect the changing needs and interests of the community.

A target has been established for each strategy in the plan. Targets include both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data will come from surveys, and provide information on outcomes, or about how people feel about an activity. Quantitative data will be collected from the Library's integrated library system, or manual tallies.

Strategic Plan - Measurement Plan	Strategic Plan 2021-2024	
CENTER OF POSSIBILITIES	How?	When?
Increase the number of programs with expert presenters	Count	Each program
Community partners feel valued by the Library	Survey	Annual
Volunteers are more appropriately matched to tasks	Report by managers	Each
75% of library users will say they learned something new from library programs or resources each year	Survey	Annual
75% of library users say they found the help they were looking for/they needed	Survey	Annual
Accessibility audits of online and at physical locations will be conducted and the information learned there will be used to improve accessibility.	Audit	Annual
Increased use of self-guided learning tutorials	Count	Monthly
Community members will say they can access our services independently	Survey	Annual
85% of survey respondents indicate that the service/resources they use(d) is essential to their life	Survey	Annual
Community survey indicates that LPCPL is in the top 3 listed "Key La Porte County Resources"	Survey	Annual
Increased use of services (i.e.: reference desk) and collections (i.e.: databases)	Count	Monthly
85% of survey respondents answer, "Yes" to the statement, "LPCPL is where I can go to learn anything and everything!"	Survey	Annual
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION	How?	When?
Increase by 50% number of Library staff will be utilized by outside groups to share their expertise	Count	Annual
Increased use of library facilities as place to meet by 50%	Count	Annual
Survey participants can list at least five different services the Library offers	Survey	Annual
At least 2 Library services have been integrated into the community in a new way	Count	Annual
Increased cross-promotion with other organizations each year	Count	Annual
At least 2 new partnerships formed each year with organizations LPCPL has never partnered with before	Count	Annual
More community members will use the Library	Count	Annual
Branding/Style Guide will be implemented and used by staff at all levels	Reporting	Quarterly

85% surveyed will say the Library is one of the most valuable organizations in the community	Survey	Annual
Other organizations will seek out Library staff for expertise	Count	Annual
TECHNOLOGY ACCESS	How?	When?
All staff will participate in at least 3 tech competency training(s) per year	Count	Annual
Staff will report feeling more able to help customers who approached them	Reporting	Annual
Survey will show fewer knowledge gaps each year	Survey	Annual
Library users will report finding the help they need in the first staff member they approached (either directly or through that staff person connecting them to the right person to help them)	Survey	Annual
Use of tech resources increased by 25%	Count	Annual
Increase independent Makerspace use by 100% (double current use)	Count	Annual
Increase circulation of Library of Things by 50%	Count	Annual
Increase the # of in-person tech classes (non-Makerspace) by 50%		Annual
Survey will indicate that 75% or higher of Library users found instructions for technology to be clear and user-friendly	Survey	Annual
Increase tech class attendance by 50%	Count	Annual
Decreased digital divide among community members	Reporting	Annual
Community members have “skilled up” and will report an improved quality of life	Survey	Annual
Community surveys will indicate that 50% of survey participants consider the Library to be one of the top two community resources for tech learning and/or opportunities	Survey	Annual
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION	How?	When?
Increased diversity among staff and volunteers	Reporting/Audit	Annual
When asked, 100% of staff will be able to clearly define what equity, diversity, and inclusion mean at La Porte County Public Library and give real-life examples of how they’ve seen the terms put into action with the library organization.	Survey	Annual
Increased diversity (in multiple ways) among our customers	Reporting	Annual
Serving underserved populations increased by 30%	Survey	Annual
Library customers recognize and appreciate the diverse communities within La Porte County	Reporting	Annual

Programs/classes/events/resources reflect the diversity of our communities	Reporting	Each
>95% of those who visited the Library said they felt welcome	Survey	Annual
12 opportunities offered for conversations/focus groups, specifically about equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility	Count	Each
3 new or deepened partnerships with other community organizations also trying to bring attention to EDI issues	Count	Annual
Community members identify us as a leader toward greater equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility	Survey	Annual
INTENTIONAL DECISION-MAKING	How?	When?
Staff spend 80% of their time on their focus areas and better prioritize how to spend their time	Reporting	Annual
Staff feel empowered to make decisions that are in both their own interest and align with Library goals	Reporting	Annual
Customers receive better service because they are accurately directed to staff members who can best help them because staff have a clear understanding of their and other staff role and focus areas.	Survey	Annual
Survey participants can identify at least a baseline awareness of library services	Survey	Annual
Staff feel a sustainable workflow balance has been maintained by considering what programs/services must be eliminated or adapted before beginning new offerings	Reporting	Annual
Staff and customers feel their perspective was considered in Library decision-making	Reporting	Annual
Whether the number of programs and services increases, stays the same, or decreases, Library users will indicate an increase in impact of existing programs and services each year	Reporting	Annual
Staff report being happier with software tools available to them	Reporting	Annual
Staff report a 20% increase in their own perceived productivity	Reporting	Annual
Managers report a 20% increase in perceived departmental work satisfaction and productivity	Reporting	Annual
Staff feel able to identify where they have room for personalization and feel empowered to improve their own workflows	Reporting	Annual

Communications Plan/Financial Resources and Sustainability/Professional Development Strategy/Collaboration

- Long-range plan will be made available on the library's website
- A social media marketing piece will be created and shared on the library's social channels
- A printed marketing piece which state the values, vision, mission, and key priorities, will be distributed at the library and other locations
- Presentations on the plan will be made to local service organizations
- An announcement about the new long-range plan will be made in the library's newsletter
- Staff will attend an in-service day session on the content of the plan on an annual basis

Financial Resources and Sustainability

- Our Operating Fund Budget will be based on available sources of public funding and will not exceed the assessed value growth quotient for the budget year
- Grants may supplement the budget
- Funds from the Friends of the Library and other gift funds will be available for programming needs
- The Library Improvement Reserve Fund (LIRF) and Rainy Day Fund will be maintained at a level sufficient to appropriate funds for needed capital projects
- Collaboration with other groups in providing programs and services will enable cost-sharing

Professional Development Strategy

- Professional staff will maintain certification standards through approved online and in-person workshops and conferences
- The library will continue to use Niche Academy and our learning management system to provide training modules for staff as needed
- Professional staff will be encouraged to attend conferences each year, and other skills enhancing training opportunities
- All team members are encouraged to attend appropriate training related to their job duties

Collaboration

- LPCPL actively seeks and maintains collaboration in the community
- LPCPL is a full partner using SRCS for interlibrary loan
- LPCPL is a member of Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) and is an institutional member of ALA and ILF
- LPCPL is a member of the La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership, Indiana State Chamber of Commerce, Rolling Prairie Business and Community Association, and the South County Coalition.
- LPCPL plans to seek opportunities to partner in programming and community events with other La Porte County libraries
- LPCPL is dedicated to supporting our local schools through the Libraries 360 program to provide fine-free library cards to students and teachers to ensure that students and teachers have 24/7 access to digital resources, to books and to other materials in the library's collections.

Appendix H: Technology Replacement Plan

FY 2022		
Category	Total Item QTY	Total Estimated Cost
TVs	21	\$10,500
TV Devices	20	\$ 3,580
Network Infrastructure	8	\$ 40,156
Apple iPads	7	\$3,150
Printers	26	\$ 20,000
Public Use Computers	10	\$8,000
Security Systems	3	\$ 45,000
Staff Laptops	15	\$30,000
	TOTAL	\$160,386
FY 2023		
Category	Total Item QTY	Total Estimated Cost
Network Infrastructure	2	\$22,575
Apple iPads	9	\$ 4,050
Public Use Computers	59	\$60,000
Staff Laptops	27	\$54,000
	TOTAL	\$140,625
FY 2024		
Category	Total Item QTY	Total Estimated Cost
TV Devices	18	\$720
Network Infrastructure	24	\$ 46,710
Apple iPads	16	\$7,200
Printers	4	\$3,200
Public Use Systems	1	\$10,000
Staff Laptops	28	\$41,776
		\$109,606