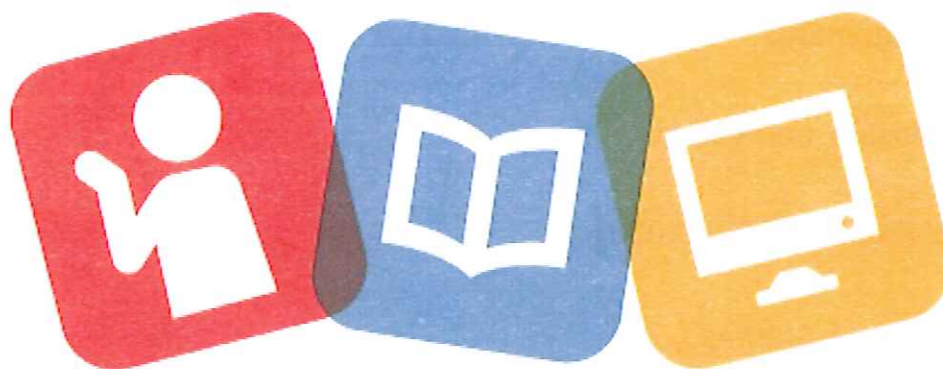


Our Library, Our Future



Gloucester County Library System

Strategic Plan 2013-2016

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Mullica Hill, NJ 08062

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OUR LIBRARY, OUR FUTURE

The Gloucester County Library System Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016

The goal of the Our Library, Our Future project was to conduct a strategic planning process that would foster a community-generated vision for the future of the Gloucester County Library System (GCLS) built upon the common values, needs and desires of library customers, staff, stakeholders and the community. The resulting Strategic Plan will guide GCLS as it meets the changing needs and expectations of the diverse communities it serves.

The Process

In the fall of 2012, the Gloucester County Library Commission engaged the services of the Educational Information and Resource Center (EIRC) to facilitate the strategic planning process. Understanding the importance and value of community input, a customer survey was developed and distributed both online and in paper form. (Some customer comments are included in this document.) A separate survey was sent to library staff. Three public community forums were held to encourage dialogue about GCLS' future. The first community meeting, "Points of Pride", was held on November 13, 2012 and asked participants to identify what was working well in GCLS. The second meeting was held on December 4, 2012 and focused on the theme "Looking to the Future". Participants were asked to suggest strategic priorities based on the work done in the first session. The final community meeting, "Action Plan – Confirming Our Future", was held on January 16, 2013. Participants identified action steps needed to achieve the strategic priorities. (See our website for the "Gloucester County Library System Strategic Planning Report" submitted by EIRC which includes a summary of survey responses and community meetings).

The Gloucester County Library Commission was involved throughout the strategic planning process with many commissioners responding to the customer survey and attending one or more of the community meetings. The Commission Planning Committee met on March 18, 2013. After review of the EIRC facilitator's report, survey responses and community input, the planning committee identified the following five strategic goal areas: Staffing, Services, Technology, Facilities, and Funding.

The full Library Commission met with the EIRC facilitators on May 6, 2013 to hear the report of the Planning Committee, review and provide input to the strategic priorities and identify possible action steps. The Commission Planning Committee worked collaboratively with library administration to produce a draft plan. The "Our Library, Our Future – The Gloucester County Library System Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016" was adopted by the Gloucester County Library Commission at its meeting on September 25, 2013.

Acknowledgments

This plan is the result of a nearly year-long process that required many hours of work on the part of a diverse group of individuals – library staff, GCL Commissioners and members of the community. The Gloucester County Library Commission wishes to express their deep appreciation for their contributions and insights. A special thank you is owed to those individuals who took the time to fill out surveys and participate in the community forums. The plan developed through their efforts will guide the future direction of the Gloucester County Library System.

Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 2013

Robert M. Damminger, Freeholder Director

Giuseppe (Joe) Chila, Deputy Director

Lyman Barnes, Freeholder Liaison

Vincent H. Nestore, Jr.

Heather Simmons

Adam J. Taliaferro

Larry Wallace

Gloucester County Library Commission, 2013

Gregory G. Cipolla, Chair

Gerald Michael Jr., Vice Chair*

Richard Ambacher, Jr.

Edward J. Campbell*

David Flaherty

Kathy Love-Moore*

Donna L. Ragonese

John A. Alice Esq., Solicitor

Anne M. Wodnick, Library Director

*Planning Committee member

Educational Information and Resource Center Facilitators

Dr. Charles Ivory

Patricia Bruder

Our Mission, Vision, and Values



Our Vision

GCLS libraries are the center of an informed, engaged, and connected community.



Our Mission

The Gloucester County Library System provides welcoming community spaces where people gather to learn, create, and have fun.



Our Values



Strategic Priorities and Goals 2013 – 2016

The Gloucester County Library Commission carefully considered current economic and demographic indicators, discussed the EIRC facilitator's strategic planning report and the input received from the community, and looked at trends and changes affecting the delivery of library service now and for the immediate future. The following Strategic Priorities were identified:

Priority I: Staffing

Goal: Provide the best possible library service at all locations by employing an adequate number of qualified staff with the skills, education, and certification levels required to meet the needs of the community.

Priority II: Services and Programs

Goal: Meet the community's increasing and changing needs for services and programs that inform, engage, and connect.

Priority III: Technology

Goal: Expand and enhance library services by improving the existing technology infrastructure and staying current with emerging technologies.

Priority IV: Facilities

Goal: Provide 21st century library facilities throughout the county to serve as community learning centers for residents of GCLS member communities and beyond.

Priority V: Funding

Goal: Provide outstanding 21st century library service by remaining fiscally responsible and securing the long-term financial health of GCLS.



"The staff is always helpful. They go out of their way to help you any way they can."

Priority I: Staffing

Goal: Provide the best possible library service at all locations by employing an adequate number of qualified staff with the skills, education, and certification levels required to meet the needs of the community.

Objective I-A: Provide for adequate staffing at each branch location to meet the requirements of the strategic plan.

Action Steps:

1. Work with Gloucester County Human Resources to find qualified candidates for open library positions
2. Review staffing needs to achieve an appropriate balance of full time and part time personnel
3. Implement online staff scheduling software to simplify the process of providing adequate public area coverage system-wide
4. Review and revise departmental structure and procedures

Objective I-B: Increase the number of certified professional librarians over the life of the plan in order to provide needed youth services, adult/reference services, and digital services.

Action Steps:

1. As openings occur, require that branch managers are certified professional librarians
2. Hire a certified professional librarian to provide youth services at each branch, beginning with the Glassboro Branch
3. Hire additional certified professional librarians to providing adult/reference service at Mullica Hill
4. Hire an IT librarian to assist with implementation of emerging technologies, including development of staff and public technology training
5. Provide support and mentoring for staff pursuing a Masters in Library Science (MLS, MLIS)
6. Actively solicit student interns from ALA accredited library science programs

Objective I-C: Increase opportunities for all staff to develop the skills needed to serve the community.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a staff development plan that provides ongoing skills and technology training for every staff member
2. Provide opportunities for attendance at library-related conferences, seminars, workshops and webinars
3. Provide cross-training



***“The library helps me
connect to the world.”***



Priority II: Services and Programs

Goal: Meet the community’s increasing and changing needs for services and programs that inform, engage and connect.

Objective II-A: Provide resources and diverse programming to support the library as a community learning center for people of all ages, offering opportunities for learning, creativity and enrichment.

Action Steps:

1. Partner with the education community to develop and offer innovative programs that support students and life-long learners
2. Develop and provide programming designed to appeal to adults ages 18 – 30
3. Provide resources and programming that support economic development and address the needs of the business community, job seekers and entrepreneurs
4. Develop and provide diverse cultural programming of interest to all ages
5. Develop and provide Homework Help services for students to include online resources and in-library assistance
6. Solicit community input regarding program offerings
7. Designate a staff person to coordinate library programming

"The library helps me to keep up on current events, indulge my love of reading, and have a sense of community."

Objective II-B: Provide access to library materials in a variety of formats to meet the needs of library customers.

Action Steps:

1. Include funds in the operating budget to expand and improve the library collection
2. Review and revise the GCLS Collection Development Policy
3. Weed the collection system-wide. Implement use of collection development and management software to improve the collection and better meet customer demand
4. Expand eContent, including eBooks, eAudio, music, periodicals, and video
5. Expand the availability of library materials in various languages to meet diverse community needs.
6. Enhance the young adult collection to reflect the needs and interests of teens, including eBooks and graphic novels

Objective II-C: Engage the community by communicating the value provided by GCLS.

Action Steps:

1. Pursue having a regular library column in local publications
2. Create a consistent system-wide brand for library program and marketing materials
3. Expand librarian outreach to government agencies, schools and community organizations to promote library services
4. Provide opportunities for people to relate the positive impact the library has had on their lives. Share their stories with elected officials and the community at large
5. Seek out new opportunities and avenues for communication with library customers
6. Develop and implement a "Library Champion" campaign
7. Develop and distribute an annual report
8. Explore the creation of an ombudsman position to provide information about county and/or municipal services

Priority III: Technology

Goal: Expand and enhance library services by improving the existing technology infrastructure and staying current with emerging technologies.

Objective III-A: Provide new technology services in response to community interests and needs.

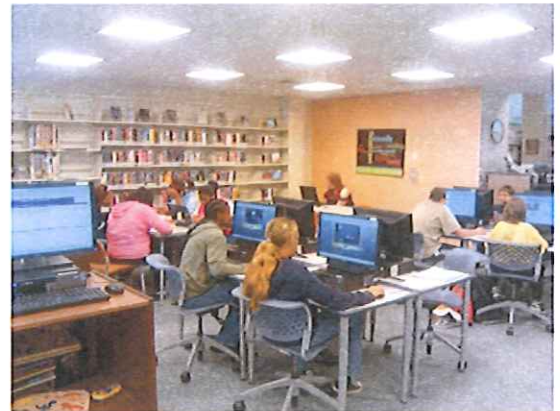
Action Steps:

1. Create a committee of qualified staff to evaluate current and emerging technologies for possible implementation. Invite a GCL Commissioner to participate
2. Provide a "Maker Space" at Mullica Hill
3. Provide hands-on learning opportunities for customers and staff to become familiar with emerging technologies
4. Consider circulation of eReader devices with preloaded titles
5. Provide additional bilingual AWE computers for preschoolers
6. Plan for collaborative study spaces, to include appropriate technology

Objective III-B: Use technology and software to improve staff efficiency and enhance customer service.

Action Steps:

1. Provide for self-service check-out at all locations
2. Implement the use of collection development and management software to improve the collection and better meet customer demand
3. Implement online staff scheduling software to simplify the process of providing adequate public area coverage system-wide
4. Redesign the staff intranet
5. Implement the use of software to create a consistent system-wide brand for library program and marketing materials



Objective III-C: Continually evaluate and update the GCLS website.

Action Steps:

1. Investigate ways to improve the catalog search function through use of discovery services or software applications
2. Enhance collection information through use of widgets to provide new book lists
3. Improve mobile presence
4. Create research guides specific to community needs
5. Create digital content highlighting local historical and/or artistic collections and make it available online

Objective III-D: Develop a system-wide strategy for maintenance and replacement of public and staff computers.

Action Steps:

1. Perform a system-wide technology audit
2. Improve capability of remote maintenance of staff and public area computers
3. Develop a hardware and software replacement schedule
4. Investigate the use of portable devices for public and staff use

Objective III-E: Review network infrastructure with a goal to increase efficiencies and improve performance.

Action Steps:

1. Reduce number of network servers by moving services and applications to the cloud
2. Review broadband capability to determine if/when upgrades are needed
3. Investigate use of technology services provided by other agencies

*"My favorite thing about the library
is...the computer learning
workshops."*

Priority IV: Facilities

Goal: Provide 21st century library facilities throughout the county to serve as community learning centers for residents of GCLS member communities and beyond.

Objective IV-A: Provide comfortable and inviting spaces to meet the needs of library customers.

Action Steps:

1. Repurpose space, when possible, to provide additional comfortable seating areas and/or space for additional technology
2. Plan for additional quiet and collaborative study spaces, to include appropriate technology
3. Work with the county to provide at least one interior digital message board at each branch location

Objective IV-B: Evaluate existing GCLS library facilities in terms of accessibility, building maintenance, safety and disaster preparedness.

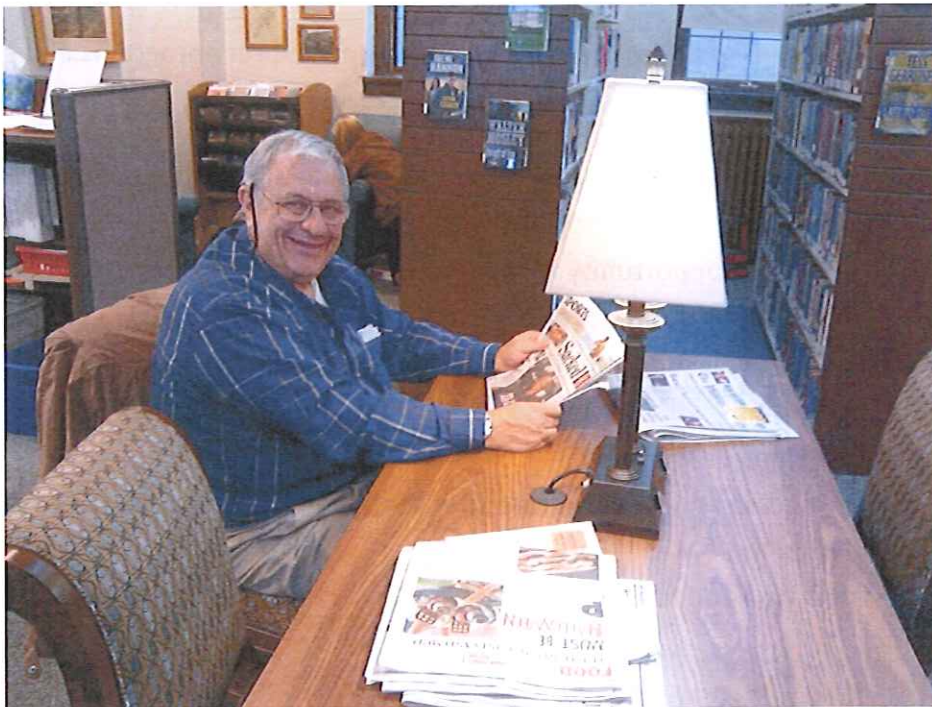
Action Steps:

1. Perform a building audit at each location, noting facility condition and needed maintenance or repairs
2. Gather necessary information and complete building operation manual for each facility
3. Provide appropriate staff safety training offered through the Gloucester County Insurance Commission.
4. Complete review of interior, on-site and street signage
5. Review and update building security systems
6. Update the GCLS Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Manual
7. Work with county and municipal officials to identify possible ways for GCLS to assist in periods of extreme weather and/or natural disasters

Objective IV-C: Evaluate existing GCLS library facilities in terms of future needs and projected demographics with a focus on regional service areas within the county.

Action Steps:

1. Work with Borough officials to provide a new facility in Glassboro that will serve as a regional library and technology/community center that will meet the needs of the expanding populations of Glassboro, Clayton, Elk Township, and the Rowan University community
 - In planning a new Glassboro Library include an expanded Children's area, a separate Teen area, increased number of public computer workstations, a computer training lab, areas for quiet/collaborative study, a local history room, community meeting rooms and areas for program presentation, additional parking and improved lighting
2. Review the need for expansion of the Logan Township Branch
3. Be open to shared services agreements that would expand service to underserved areas of the county



Priority V: Funding

Goal: Provide outstanding 21st century library service by remaining fiscally responsible and securing the long-term financial health of GCLS.

"[The library is] a warehouse of knowledge and entertainment. In here, I have access to a thousand great minds. This is the best return on tax dollars."

Objective V-A: Secure support for stable library funding from elected officials and residents.

Action steps:

1. Communicate with county officials on a regular basis to encourage support of the annual GCLS operating budget
2. Incorporate strategic plan recommendations into the GCLS operating budget over the period covered by the plan
3. Engage the community and local and regional businesses by communicating the value provided by GCLS
4. Develop and distribute an annual report

Objective V-B: Explore sources of alternative revenue to support library programs and services.

Action steps:

1. Explore creation of a Library Foundation to provide financial support for library programs and services through fund development activities
2. Provide a web-based opportunity for individual financial donations
3. Explore additional shared services and other collaborative efforts with local municipalities, county departments and agencies
4. Develop partnerships with businesses and community organizations to provide funding for library programs or services
5. Pursue grant funding and/or corporate sponsorship for technology related programs
6. Consider offering fee-based services
7. Review existing fine and fee structure

Measuring Success

The Gloucester County Library Commission and the library management team will continually measure the library's progress and success. Each year, Library Commissioners and staff will schedule time to assess their progress in meeting the goals and objectives specified in this plan. Goals and objectives will be modified depending on changing needs and circumstances during the planning cycle.

Evaluation will be based in part on traditional statistics that are recorded annually by libraries in New Jersey including circulation, customer visits, reference transactions, program attendance, and library card registration. In addition, the following indicators of success will be used:

- Funding in support of the plan will be incorporated into the annual budget process so that sufficient resources can be allocated for successful completion of goals and objectives
- Outcome-based evaluations of selected programs and services will identify program effectiveness and demonstrate the library's contributions to the community
- Formal and informal surveys of customers will be conducted to assess needs and measure levels of satisfaction
- The library will receive positive press coverage and will be frequently cited in the local news and papers for its programs and activities

Progress will be communicated through media and online communication channels, including the GCLS website, electronic newsletters, social networking sites, and collaboration with the Gloucester County Public Information Office.



