DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY
STRATEGIC DIRECTION
2017-2019

libraries for life

dallaspupliclibrary
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Dear Dallas Residents,

Your Dallas Public Library is committed to strengthening communities by connecting people, inspiring curiosity and advancing lives. We stay relevant to you and your life by offering programs and services that help you grow, throughout all of life’s stages.

We know that you are the heart of the public library, so in August 2015, the Dallas Public Library (DPL) set out to develop a direction that truly reflects your wants, needs and interests to better serve you now and in the future. With the assistance of consultant groups CIVICTechnologies and Ideation Collaborative, library staff came together in exploratory conversations, hosted community forums, surveyed customers and analyzed the resulting information to shed light on the everyday needs of our customers.

Through this process, we established three strategic focus areas where we believe DPL can have the greatest impact on your life in the City of Dallas:

**S.M.A.R.T. Kids** connects youth with opportunities that inspire curiosity and build 21st Century skills, through Science, Math, Art, Reading and Technology.

**Work Skills** provides adults with educational opportunities and job seeking services that address obstacles to socioeconomic mobility and employability.

**Vibrant Neighborhoods** provides opportunities for people of all ages to discover each other and the library through art, cultural, literary and civic experiences.

The library has established four long-term strategic objectives that support the library’s execution of these focus areas: the library will focus on Operations, Collections & Support and Customer Experience throughout the library system and with a focus on better activating the Central Library downtown.

Over the next three years, the library will implement this direction at its 29 locations by taking a multi-phased approach: we will Build Capacity through talent development and organizational restructuring, and Build Community through focused efforts that extend the library’s reach and increases its impact on the community. Finally, we will Evaluate and Calibrate the strategic direction for effectiveness and sustainability.

We need strong libraries more than ever; our success relies on continued growth and staff development. We will continue to do what we do best, provide a place for limitless possibilities to all who enter the library.

Respectfully,

Jo Giudice
In 1899, the Dallas Federation of Women’s Clubs conceived of a public library after it was determined that the city’s future vitality depended upon having this free resource available to residents. Grassroots fundraising and a grant from Andrew Carnegie established the first library building in 1901 with a head librarian, three assistants, and less than 10,000 volumes. A second library branch opened in 1914, and four more in the 1930s, including a library for the city’s previously unserved African American population. In World War II, the library was fully established as a War Information Center, but by the 1950s the Carnegie Library was overused and overcrowded, and a new modern library was built on the same site and opened in 1954.

In 1962, Lillian M. Bradshaw was named Library Director, the first woman to lead a major public library in the U.S. She ushered in an era of transformation for DPL, improving its geographic breadth with 17 additional branches during the 1960’s and 1970’s. In response to emerging technology and space issues, an updated eight-story library building was opened in 1982, later named the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library. It was one of the first libraries in the nation to include an Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

Today, the DPL system consists of the Central Library and 28 neighborhood branches that span the geographic breadth of the city, conveniently located in neighborhoods, schools, and even a shopping mall. In fiscal year 2016 DPL had a staggering 7.2 million visitors, both online and in-person, over 12,000,000 materials circulated, and over 50,000 volunteer hours logged. Dallas Public Library is more than books – it is a safe haven for a free democratic society, offering a lifetime of enrichment and education for all.
Since August 2015, the Dallas Public Library has worked with consultant groups CIVICTechnologies and Ideation Collaborative to facilitate and create a 3-year strategic direction for library services. CIVICTechnologies uses data and online software tools to move libraries away from a supply-based approach toward a demand-based approach to services. While a supply-based approach develops services based on what the library currently offers, a demand-based approach considers customer needs and seeks to establish innovative ways for libraries to meet those needs.

Using customer data from the library’s Integrated Library System (ILS), including customer checkout behavior, geocoded customer locations and aggregated data by Census block groups and library service area, CIVICTechnologies provided community analytics using LandScape market segmentation categories of existing and potential customers based upon common characteristics and market consumption behaviors. Qualitative data was also collected through community and staff focus groups, forums and surveys. Together this data was used to guide the library in developing its strategic direction and a clear vision for the future.

Library staff analyzed LandScape market segmentation data and gathered extensive community feedback through community forums and 3,000+ community survey responses. This process established three strategic focus areas where the library can have the greatest impact on people’s lives in Dallas.
**S.M.A.R.T. Kids** connects youth with opportunities that inspire curiosity in Science, Math, Art, Reading & Technology at the library, ensuring they have the **skills needed to succeed** in the 21st Century. Youth services staff, community volunteers and community partners will work collaboratively to develop S.M.A.R.T. Kids programs, focusing on three age groups: Early Childhood (0-5), School-aged (6-12) and Teens (13-17).

**Work Skills** provides educational opportunities and job seeking services that address obstacles to socioeconomic mobility and employability, ensuring adults are able to advance their lives and **reach their potential**. Adult services staff, community volunteers and community partners will work collaboratively to develop and enhance ESL (English as a Second Language), HSE (High School Equivalency), Basic Literacies (reading, numeracy and computer skills), job readiness, employment and financial empowerment resources.

**Vibrant Neighborhoods** creates opportunities to connect with each other and the library through art, cultural, literary and civic experiences that **make communities stronger**. Community engagement staff, volunteers and community partners will work collaboratively to enhance the Dallas Book Festival, artist engagement opportunities and other library hosted cultural events.
The Dallas Public Library will take a Fiscal Year (FY) based approach to implementing its strategic direction to ensure it is successful and sustainable. **Phase 1** will focus on building internal capacity to maximize existing staff competencies and funding in alignment with strategic objectives. **Phase 2** will build on the library’s increased internal capacity and use new resources to further the strategic direction’s three focus areas. **Phase 3** will focus on evaluating progress of the overall direction and revising it to continue to be relevant to the needs of the Dallas community.

**Phase 1 – FY17: October 2016-September 2017**

**Build Capacity**

In Year 1, the library will focus on resources, including staff, facilities and funding. Staff development assesses staff strengths, provides training opportunities, communicates clear performance expectations by position, and sets quality standards for programs. The library will develop a facility plan, including maintenance and the creation of optimal learning environments, ensuring the library is equipped to produce programs, resources and materials that meet unique communities’ needs. Funding opportunities will be sought to support new programs and technological deployments. The library will benchmark existing processes, as well as new initiatives, to provide data for quarterly review.

**Phase 2 – FY18: October 2017-September 2018**

**Build Community**

Year 2 focuses on improving effective community engagement: creating more opportunities for connections, establishing the library in the life of customers, and popping up in unexpected places. Over time, the library will transform into a community center; it will become a place for civic engagement, literacy programs, informational materials, entertainment and community meetings, based on the needs of each unique neighborhood. Feedback will be regularly collected from customers to record the progress of new and existing initiatives.

**Phase 3 – FY19: October 2018-September 2019**

**Evaluate and Calibrate**

Year 3 will continue new staff development and community engagement efforts, while beginning to outline the library’s future direction. We will assess and realign the library’s focus areas based on updated evaluations of community needs, customer feedback, and the success of the 2017-2019 Strategic Direction’s initiatives.
A Strategic Goal is a long-term goal that guides library priorities over the next three years. Each work group is led by an Assistant Director, as noted in the library’s organizational chart, to ensure internal accountability for system-wide goals.

Performance Measures are quantifiable indicators used to assess the library’s status in achieving its goals. Baselines and targets are established for each measure to ensure the library stays on its pathway to success.

Action Plans are the planned steps staff takes to meet performance measures. All action items are assigned to a work group responsible for completing each step by developing partnerships, seeking resources and utilizing library staff skills to meet system-wide goals.
STRATEGIC GOAL: Manage resources to ensure buildings are welcoming learning environments and library staff is equipped to promote S.M.A.R.T. Kids, Work Skills and Vibrant Neighborhoods

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: Increase number of library buildings that receive minor improvements that enhance visual appeal and create a more conducive learning environment as funds become available
a. Complete comprehensive assessments of facility conditions and develop prioritized improvement plans by location
b. Monitor library service requests to decrease wait time and ensure timely response to requests
c. Develop a multi-year facility plan to prioritize major building repair, renovation or replacement needs
d. Identify funding plan to support building maintenance and enhancements

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: Maintain rate of customer satisfaction with cleanliness of library spaces
a. Evaluate facilities for optimal learning environments and develop improvement plans by location
b. Maximize existing resources and seek new funding to improve facility conditions and create optimal learning spaces
c. Develop visual appeal standards for library spaces, create staff training and design an implementation plan

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: Increase number of Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) submitted by library staff by ten percent annually, to ensure the continuous and timely improvement of work processes and procedures
a. Roll out ISO 9001 (International Standards Organization criteria) staff training to use as a quality work processes tool
b. Develop strategy to encourage an increase in staff submissions of Opportunities for Improvement (OFI)
c. Establish four core speed teams that address OFI’s related to Operations, Materials & Support, Customer Experience and Central Library strategic objectives
PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: Increase the total hours of professional development training completed by library staff by ten percent annually

a. Establish skills and competencies standards for library staff
b. Create professional development plan with specific hours, topics and recommendations by position type
c. Research trends in library skills and competency expectations from local and national library sources
d. Provide opportunities in-person and online for professional development, including conference stipends to American Library Association (ALA), Public Library Association (PLA), Texas Library Association (TLA) and other specialized organizations
e. Conduct staff training needs and skills survey annually
f. Integrate professional development expectations into staff performance plans
g. Establish library Service Pledge addressing standards for all library experiences
h. Create opportunities for cross-location training for new and existing staff

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 5: Decrease voluntary turnover rate to fourteen percent or less by FY19

a. Develop plan for retaining staff in a competitive labor market, including evaluating position salaries, options for upward mobility, a program to recognize staff milestones and other methods of recognition
b. Realign organizational chart to ensure equity of staff among locations
c. Maintain list of position vacancies and current statuses
d. Stay up-to-date with Human Resources standardized procedures for interviewing and hiring to ensure timely onboarding
e. Create a hiring procedure and interview questions for subject specialty positions
f. Develop process to include supervisor preferences in new hires
g. Provide job descriptions and expectations to candidates prior to hiring
h. Develop strategy to market library positions and vacancies beyond the City of Dallas website

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 6: Enhance communication among staff

a. Explore innovative methods of organization-wide communication
b. Restructure quarterly staff meetings
c. Reformat management meetings to incorporate collaboration
2 STRATEGIC GOAL: Deliver and maintain materials and technology to ensure library staff can promote S.M.A.R.T. Kids, Work Skills and Vibrant Neighborhoods

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: Increase by five percent annually the amount of material that circulates to better meet customer demand

- a. Staff weed their collections regularly and determine what materials to purchase based on data from Collection HQ (a comprehensive collection analysis tool) and their Community Needs Tracking Sheet; library collections and digital content reflect the wants and needs of each local community
- b. Staff review unit collections and create purchasing lists to support material needs identified by the strategic focus areas
- c. Staff assess current database offerings to ensure availability of resources that support the library’s focus areas
- d. Add a Children’s Material Selector and a Digital Cataloger to Acquisitions and Cataloging team
- e. Promote the library’s many collections

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: Improve ease of access to materials and customer experience when using library resources

- a. Develop strategies to reduce checkout wait times by promoting self-checkout and equipping staff with mobile technology
- b. All locations work their Request-to-Fill lists continually throughout the day
- c. Staff shelve materials in accordance with ISO 9001 procedures
- d. Add a Digital Content Librarian to the eServices team to improve user-friendliness and accessibility of online services

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: Maintain rate of customer satisfaction with usefulness of library technology

- a. Develop annual customer feedback plan to provide more opportunities for feedback on library technology and database choices
- b. Develop a multi-year technology plan based on results of customer and staff feedback, as well as trends and developments in assistive technologies
- c. Collect data on number of public computer sessions and WiFi users at all locations
PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: All staff will be able to troubleshoot basic technology inquiries by FY19
   a. Develop and conduct annual technology needs assessment and satisfaction survey for staff
   b. Purchase technology for staff to conduct community programs, including but not limited to laptops, tablets, wireless internet hotspots, projectors, and accessories
   c. Develop staff training plan to increase competencies in e-services, database use and other library tools
   d. Develop staff training plan and document procedure for use of all audio/visual equipment located in the library

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 5: Increase the total number of active library card holders by five percent by FY19
   a. Establish marketing and communications team expectations
   b. Develop plan to issue library cards to all Dallas Independent School District students and all other schools located in the city of Dallas
   c. Regularly engage library card holders through email notifications, social media and ongoing customer feedback opportunities
   d. Survey inactive card holders to overcome barriers to use; develop short and long-term solutions to address them

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 6: Increase annual library visitor count by ten percent by FY19
   a. Develop strategies to boost visitor count at locations with high disparities between service area population and number of visitors
   b. Use market segmentation data to develop marketing and communications plan to grow library usage in key market areas
   c. Provide training to maintain high customer service satisfaction score
   d. Improve design and content maintenance of library website
   e. Create social media guidelines and standards
   f. Develop strategy to gather and analyze web and social media data to quantify virtual reach
**STRATEGIC GOAL:** Develop programs that provide customers with opportunities to learn through the library and its partners to advance S.M.A.R.T. Kids, Work Skills and Vibrant Neighborhoods

**PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1:** Ensure all early literacy programs meet or exceed quality standards for early literacy programming
a. Establish quality standards and an assessment tool for early literacy programming
b. Develop training module for new and struggling early literacy program providers
c. Train and equip five children’s specialists/children’s librarians to present Every Child Ready to Read workshops to ensure availability of workshops citywide
d. Determine and seek funding to support early literacy program supplies and expansion efforts
e. Report best practices and outcomes to stakeholders

**PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2:** Improve quality of Out-of-School Time (OST) opportunities that build S.M.A.R.T. skills in youth year-round
a. Create 21st Century skill-building curriculum for after school programming; pilot at five locations
b. Develop S.M.A.R.T. Kids program toolkit to be replicated at multiple library locations
c. Seek additional partnerships to offer wraparound services for youth that address barriers to education through OST programs
d. Develop service learning opportunities for teen engagement at targeted branch locations
e. Develop partnerships with public schools and educational nonprofit organizations to assess effectiveness of summer reading initiatives
f. Seek additional partnerships to expand Summer Book Buddies tutoring program
g. Determine and seek funding to support after school program supplies and expansion efforts
PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: Increase participation in workforce development library programs that improve employability and socioeconomic advancement by five percent by FY19

a. Create workforce development curriculum for job-seeking at five locations
b. Seek partnerships to expand workforce development resources in libraries
c. Incorporate workforce skills development into existing adult education curricula, including ESL, HSE and Basic Literacy classes
d. Expand tax filing assistance services to help those eligible obtain Earned Income Tax Credits and other financial education opportunities
e. Train branch staff on small business and entrepreneurial resources available through Dallas B.R.A.I.N. (Business Resource And Information Network)
f. Determine and seek funding to support workforce development program instructional supplies and expansion efforts

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: Increase participation in adult programs that advance personal growth and development by five percent by FY19

a. Establish quality standards and expectations for adult programs and services
b. Develop expectations and equip adult services staff with training to meet requirements
c. Support civic engagement by offering voter registration and acting as polling site upon request

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 5: Expand library’s presence at community events and off-site programs in order to improve library visibility throughout Dallas

a. Establish standards for community outreach by staff
b. Train staff in effective outreach practices
c. Create community outreach tracking procedures and story-sharing processes
d. Develop a plan to offer access to library collections in gap areas

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 6: Increase participation in arts, cultural and literary events offered at libraries to promote more equitable access by five percent by FY19

a. Establish arts and literary working groups to improve existing events and expand community partnerships
b. Maximize Black Box Theater usage through community partnerships
c. Expand Dallas Book Festival through collaborations with community partners
d. Cultivate interdepartmental relationships to support arts, cultural and literary opportunities for seniors in Dallas
e. Determine and seek funding to support arts, cultural and literary program supplies and future initiatives
STRATEGIC GOAL: Engage downtown community and attract city-wide audiences to the Central Library through arts, culture and literary experiences

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: Enhance communication of upcoming Central Library programs to target audiences
   a. Develop shared customer distribution lists by subject specialty
   b. Develop relationships with downtown property owners, management companies, businesses and organizations
   c. Work closely with the library’s marketing team and the Friends of Dallas Public Library to develop a marketing plan promoting the Central Library and its resources

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: Improve inter-floor collaborations and communications
   a. Define role of Central Downtown Branch
   b. Develop inter-floor plan to improve staff safety, homeless engagement and overall customer experience
   c. Implement collaborative programs that highlight interdisciplinary subjects from each floor’s area of expertise
   d. Create unit-specific program plans that engage downtown residents
   e. Develop plan to better activate public spaces at Central

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: Improve visual appeal and layout of the Central library interior and exterior
   a. Develop prioritized improvement plan for the interior and exterior of the building
   b. Create a plan to better activate spaces for engagement and learning on each floor with improvements to enhance overall appearance and functionality
   c. Establish standards for meeting room set up and tear down
PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: Improve institutional knowledge transfer and cross-training to maintain levels of staff expertise
   a. Develop plan to define areas of expertise per unit, including possible renaming of floors
   b. Establish subject cross-training to ensure all staff exhibit advanced knowledge of multiple subject areas
   c. Create subject guides for each area of expertise and identify key staff to ensure transfer of knowledge resource
   d. Conduct periodic audio/visual training for Central staff members
APPENDICES FEATURED ON WEBPAGE

http://www.dallaslibrary.org/strategicdirection