

LAWRENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2023



OUR MISSION

Imagine more: a place to learn, connect, create, and grow.

OUR VISION

Our community flourishes through its embrace of diversity, promotion of inclusion and belonging, and a guarantee of equitable access to learning, growth, and opportunity for all.

OUR VALUES

Access. We ensure access to information for everyone.

Equity. We identify barriers to access and seek to eliminate them.

Respect. We treat everyone, and each other, as valued individuals.

Freedom of Information. We protect the freedom to read and view all library information, and ensure the privacy of that access.

Community Engagement. We embrace our role as a community anchor.

Quality. We strive to deliver the highest quality services possible and pledge to be friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable.

Free. We provide basic library services free of charge.

Stewardship. We hold ourselves accountable for the efficient and effective use of all resources — people, time, assets, and funds.

Staff Well-Being. We know that library staff is the key to the organization's success and believe in fair wages and benefits.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Learning

The Library is a place where people can learn together.

The Library is a learning organization for staff.

Growth

The Library will grow as an organization to meet the changing needs of our community.

The Library values continued improvement in the doing of our work.

Opportunity

The Library will empower residents to connect with the opportunities in their community.

The Library will explore public/private collaborations in order to ensure its financial stability.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brad Allen, Executive Director

Submitted to the LPL Board of Trustees on August 21, 2023



The Lawrence Public Library Board of Trustees approved the library's Mission, Vision, and Values in May 2022. The current document was modified slightly from its original iteration dating back to 2017. This executive summary will enumerate what library staff has been working on in the interim as well as where the library is headed over the next two years.

Library staff began its work putting the Board's strategic plan into action shortly after the plan's approval last May. Leadership decided the best place to start was to have each of the library's teams create inventories of the work they do and connect that work to components of the strategic plan. Work could connect to any component of the mission, vision, or values. After the teams completed their inventories, I met with each of the teams. It was clear from the inventories and the discussions that teams felt aligned with the library's mission, vision, and values.

Next, it was time to figure out how to set organizational priorities and goals that transcended the work of individual teams. To help us on this journey, the library contracted with Steven Potter, retired CEO of Mid-Continent Public Library. Steven led the library leadership team through a day-long facilitation to help define how the library would put its strategic plan into action.

Library leadership developed a framework inspired by Mid-Continent Library that would support library staff in the implementation of the strategic plan. The structure consists of four major components: a foundation focused on equity and inclusion; six pillars that describe the day-to-day work; progress indicators that measure success; and a pinnacle that captures the Library's three strategic priorities. (See diagram on the next page.)

Equity and inclusion guides the work at Lawrence Public Library. To illustrate the importance of the library's dedication to equity and inclusion, these values sit at the foundation of all that the library does. Equity and inclusion are infused into our daily work as well as the strategic priorities.

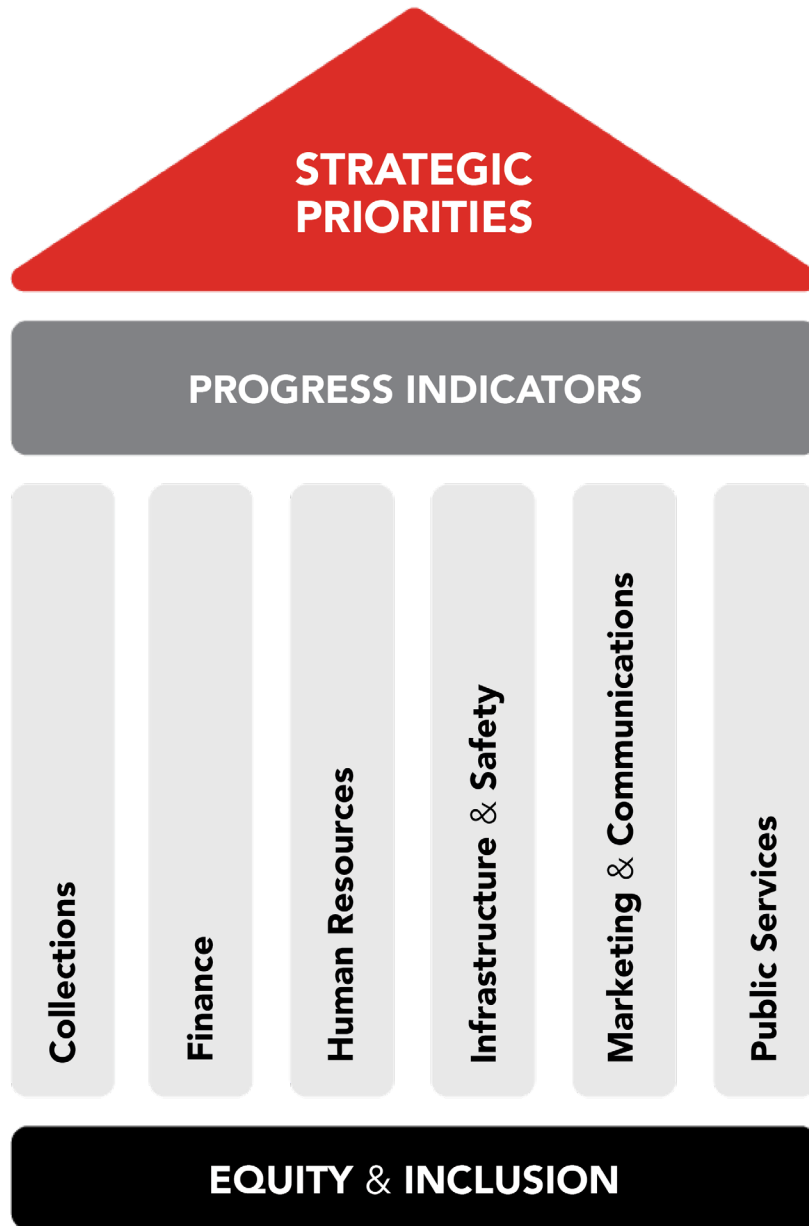
The six pillars that capture the essential but routine work of the library are Collections; Finance; Human Resources; Infrastructure and Safety; Marketing and Communications; and Public Services. Each of these pillars have guiding principles key to measuring the success of each pillar.

Three progress indicators were chosen as the most important metrics to measure the library's success: the percentage of active cardholders, Net Promoter Score, and a Library Use Index (LUI), a number built from core services that includes checkouts, renewals, gate count, program attendance, and other measurable library outputs.

Our aspirational pinnacle consists of three strategic priorities: 1) Improve patron and staff experience and increase engagement at the 707 Vermont Street campus; 2) Improve patron and staff experience and increase engagement in virtual spaces and outreach; and 3) Build on internal strengths with solid organizational structures and processes.

For each of these priorities, the library is developing objectives and goals to make measurable progress on these priorities.

OUR STRATEGIC MODEL



FOUNDATION: EQUITY & INCLUSION



Lawrence Public Library is devoted to fostering an environment where all members of our community feel welcomed, valued, and represented.

We recognize that libraries have participated and been complacent in systems that oppress and limit access for historically marginalized communities. We strive to dismantle and rectify structures that perpetuate systemic inequity and injustice as we work to build new systems that equitably serve our staff and community.

For these reasons, we understand that equity and inclusion must be centered in all of our work. They are the foundation in which both our pillars of daily service and our future aspirations are embedded.

PILLARS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES



An effective strategic plan is possible only when the basic functions of the library are sound. Checking out materials, hosting storytimes, providing internet access, and offering a welcoming public space are the cost of doing business as a library and can serve as examples of our core library “pillars” – everyday programs and services that the community has come to count on from Lawrence Public Library.

Unless the following six pillars stand strong, the library cannot move forward with its strategic priorities.



PILLAR 1 | COLLECTIONS



To many in the community, the library's collection is its most valuable asset. To ensure that patrons have access to the content they need, Lawrence Public Library lends books and materials in an increasing variety of physical and digital formats. We strive to keep a diverse and up-to-date collection and will supplement it by cooperating with other libraries and agencies, including interlibrary loan programs and state-funded databases.

The guiding principles for Collections are:

- **Provide** free access to a diverse collection that meets the informational, intellectual, cultural, and recreational needs of our community.
- **Demonstrate** stewardship both in the purchasing and regular maintenance of our collections.

PILLAR 2 | FINANCE



As a publicly funded agency, effective stewardship of tax dollars is a cornerstone of the library's mission. These resources are entrusted to the library by taxpayers to support staff, facilities, collections, programs, and services that help provide the community with a high quality public library. In partnership with the Library Friends and Foundation, private fundraising and donations supplement and strengthen the public's investment in the library.

The guiding principles for Finance are:

- **Serve** as responsible stewards of tax dollars through a balanced budget that reflects strategic library goals. Demonstrate financial integrity through transparent budgeting, cash flow management, and monthly revenue and expense reporting.
- **Foster** community engagement through private support in the form of fundraising, advocacy, and volunteerism.

PILLAR 3 | HUMAN RESOURCES



Library staff has an enormous impact on the quality of service that Lawrence Public Library provides the community. Whether through direct public service or in a supporting role, the library must ensure that staff have the support they need to do their jobs.

In addition, Lawrence Public Library has made a strong commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workforce. When employees feel that they truly belong at work, they feel more connected and committed.

The guiding principles for Human Resources are:

- **Grow** an environment of equity, respect, and staff well-being.
- **Curate** learning and development opportunities for staff to achieve high levels of customer service and foster staff growth.
- **Create** a workplace that is welcoming and supportive where employees can be their authentic selves.

PILLAR 4 | INFRASTRUCTURE & SAFETY



Lawrence Public Library is more than a place that houses books. For some library patrons, the library is a community meeting space. For others, it is a place to attend an inspiring program, connect to the internet, or is simply a place to get out of the cold.

The physical library facility is a safe and welcoming space that responds to community needs. The library's technological infrastructure is also a high priority. Providing access to new technologies to help people in our community learn, connect, create, and grow is an essential part of the library's mission.

The guiding principles for Infrastructure and Safety are:

- **Respond** effectively and efficiently to problems and immediate needs of patrons, staff, and volunteers.
- **Maintain** safe, clean, well-functioning, well-maintained, and well-equipped spaces and systems.

PILLAR 5 | MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



The library recognizes the importance of raising awareness of and fostering engagement with its collections, services, resources, events, and spaces in person and online. As a large and complex organization that serves a diverse population with both shared and unique needs, we understand the significance of a well-organized and thoughtful marketing and communications strategy, both internally and externally.

By leveraging effective marketing and communication practices, we aim to strengthen our position as a dynamic and essential community hub that enriches lives and transforms our community through the power of knowledge, learning, connection, creativity, and growth.

The guiding principles for Marketing and Communications are:

- **Champion** the library as a place that empowers individuals to achieve their full potential.
- **Demonstrate** the library's value as a vital and transformative cornerstone of community life.
- **Support** efforts to ensure that the library remains an essential resource for generations to come.

PILLAR 6 | PUBLIC SERVICES



Lawrence Public Library has the power to change the lives of individuals every day by providing library services with excellent service. Expanding access to information, ideas, and inspiration can only be achieved by providing great resources and service to the thousands of people who visit the library, either at its downtown location or online at lplks.org. The library works to transform lives in Lawrence one person at a time.

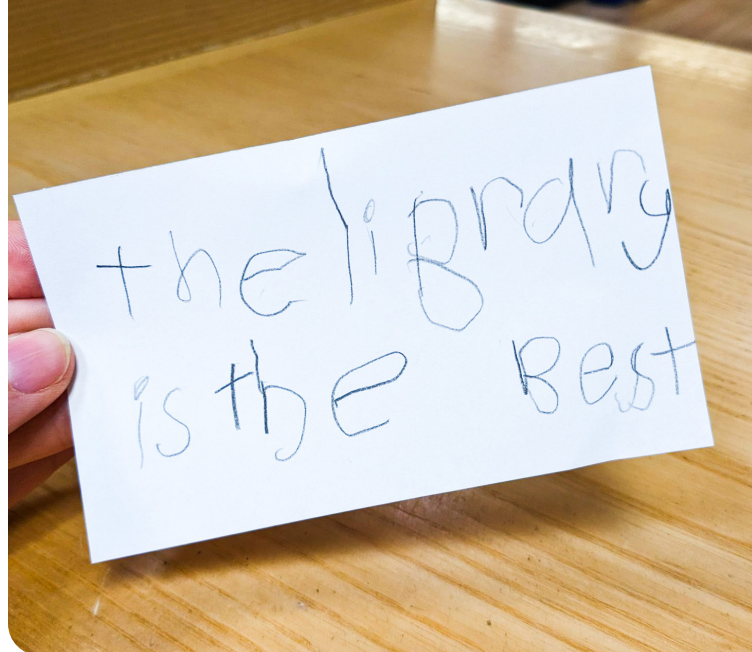
The guiding principles for Public Services are:

- **Provide** free access to and promote engagement with quality collections, resources, information, and programs through excellent customer service.
- **Foster** relationships and connections between patrons, partners, and library staff through outreach, programs, and community engagement.
- **Promote** freedom of information, reading, and literacy.

PROGRESS INDICATORS



Measuring how well Lawrence Public Library is serving our community in its daily work is critical to understanding success. Without effectively measuring our core services, it is impossible to make informed decisions, work more efficiently, gauge progress, or ensure successful implementation of our long-term strategic priorities. These important measurements allow our teams to celebrate successes, learn from failures, and adapt their strategies and workflow.



Our plan will focus on three specific progress indicators: (1) the number of people who use the library by tracking the percentage of active cardholders; (2) the satisfaction of library customers through regularly measuring Lawrence Public Library's Net Promoter Score; and (3) the number of library customer transactions through a composite Library Use Index (LUI). Reports on each progress indicator will be provided at the monthly Board of Trustees meeting. Details, definitions, and specific goals are outlined below.

Progress Indicator #1: Percentage of Active Cardholders

Percentage of Active Cardholders is defined as the number of cardholders who have used their library card within the past 12 months to access physical and digital resources at the library divided by the population of Lawrence.

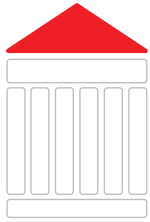
Progress Indicator #2: Customer Satisfaction

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a measure of the number of customers who would recommend the library to a friend or colleague. Specifically, the NPS is designed to measure how well the library is increasing promoters and decreasing detractors ($NPS = \% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors}$). Compared to corporations like Amazon and Walmart, public libraries have a very high NPS.

Progress Indicator #3: Customer Transactions (LUI)

The Library User Index is the sum of a compilation of library statistics that include library staff or services interacting with patrons like daily library visits, website visits, physical and digital collection circulation, attendance at library-sponsored programs, public computer sessions, and meeting room reservations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



The library identified three Strategic Priorities for 2023-2025. We will use these priorities to guide our work and set measurable goals to determine success.

From these strategic priorities, the Library will develop both organizational and team-specific SMART goals that will guide our work and demonstrate progress and success.

Our strategic priorities are:

- **Improve** patron and staff experience and increase engagement at the library and its campus.
- **Improve** patron and staff experience and increase engagement in virtual and off-site physical spaces.
- **Build** on internal strengths with solid organizational structures and processes

CONCLUSION



A strategic plan is always a work in progress, evolving as the world changes. These last few years have taught Lawrence Public Library to be more nimble and even more aware of the needs of our community. The kind of evergreen strategic plan presented above allows the library the ability to reevaluate strategic priorities to best meet community needs.

Library staff are proud of the plan presented in this update and are excited to get to work putting the Library's new strategic plan into action. The next steps will be to begin building an action plan to make progress over the next two years in achieving the strategic priorities discussed previously.

Library staff will continue to provide updates to the Library Board of Trustees as progress is made.



All are welcome.

ABOUT US

Lawrence Public Library (LPL for short) is a community hub that believes in the power of connecting with each other through shared knowledge and resources. Located in the heart of Downtown Lawrence, Kansas, we're committed to providing a space where everyone can learn, connect, create, and grow through access to our vast collections, resources, services, programs, and knowledgeable staff. The library is supported by tax dollars, the LPL Friends & Foundation's record-breaking book sales and philanthropic efforts, and dedicated efforts of more than 300 volunteers.

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