

Rockford Public Library 2022-2024 Strategic Plan

Community Initiatives

The Rockford Public Library has established this strategic plan with the following Community Initiatives in mind. As a public institution, our work supports achieving these important initiatives, and the Goals contained in our 2022-2024 strategic plan are designed to connect to and advance this work.

- 1. 100% of Third Graders in Rockford Pass the Statewide Reading Test**
- 2. Every Child is Ready for Kindergarten**
- 3. Everyone is Provided Tools to Improve their Employment, Advance their Ideas, or Explore Entrepreneurship**
- 4. Diversity and Inclusion in our Community is Celebrated**

The specific strategic goals RPL will pursue to contribute to achieving the above initiatives include:

Goals, Objectives and Tactics

Goal1: Engage parents with relevant, helpful library services and resources, through curated collections, reader's advisory help, and demonstration of appropriate activities for each developmental stage.

A. Understand and capture interests, needs, and the best communications vehicles to reach parents by conducting in-reach survey and examining relevant data.

- i. Assign a staff person to serve as point person and provide them with the resources and training they need to be successful.
- ii. Contact and develop a better understanding of other organizations' roles in the community. Create a file or maintain contact information for organizations.
- iii. Develop criteria for screening opportunities by individual staff members to ensure Library staff stay focused.
- iv. Collaborate with the data collection committee to create a strategy to gather information on parents.
- v. Train RPL staff to explore and identify where parents are searching for information and how we can engage them.
- vi. Analyze and identify usage data to determine which specific audiences need targeted marketing.

- B. Identify and implement shifts in our services that respond to the feedback received from these customers.
 - i. Based on data, align services for these target audiences.
 - ii. Create plans to add, revamp, or eliminate services based on the data.
 - iii. Implement the planned program shifts.
 - iv. Develop and implement targeted marketing and outreach plans that effectively attract parents
- C. Identify specific community organizations to create partnerships
 - i. Determine agencies and other organizations that these audiences are involved in and use them as a starting point.
 - ii. Develop and create an outreach plan to expand RPL's impact in the community.
 - iii. Search for different platforms that we may already have access to that can help us target the different groups.
 - iv. Further develop and improve our relationships with our current customers to better inform them of our services and collect testimonials.

Goal2: Evaluate, codify and expand our services related to continuing education, the underemployed, entrepreneurship, and small business support.

- A. Evaluate success of our existing programs and identify opportunities to enhance, add new, or re-consider services.
 - i. Evaluate currently accessible information concerning current offerings, services and audiences.
 - ii. Gather extra information by surveying current pool of patrons concerning services Library currently offers and ideas for what should be offered in future.
 - iii. Compile list of existing services outside of Library and contact services for understanding and possible future collaboration.
- B. Establish a structure to give guidance to those wanting to develop a new set of skills, enabling all staff to provide the same set of next steps down clearly outlined paths to success.
 - i. Create methods and pathways using audio, video, library resources, and data as well as resources outside the library.
 - ii. Have periodic training to refresh staff for these tactics. Train staff on how to use pathways and methods.
 - iii. Create three distinct processes, one each, for entrepreneurs, job seekers with a diploma/GED, and job seekers without a high school diploma.
- C. Expand entrepreneurial services by identifying those wanting to start or grow their business, determining their need, and matching them to current or new resources.
 - i. Connect with other organizations in the community who support entrepreneurs.
 - ii. Create a process for sorting and categorizing potential Library customers based on what their desired objectives are.
 - iii. Make sure all staff members are trained on what to do when someone contacts the library in need of business assistance or for assistance in finding a job.

- iv. Establish a process for annually evaluating these services and making necessary improvements.
- D. Identify and engage with the under-employed and those seeking additional education or skills to understand their goals and ensure we have the right resources in place to assist them.
 - i. Determine specific audiences, relevant data, and who serves each audience; and, understand how they serve as well as any gaps.
 - ii. Conduct research to identify best practices and determine whether appropriate services are offered in Rockford; if not determine the Library's capacity to add those services.
 - iii. Determine how to identify & reach each audience and how we will measure success.
 - iv. Establish or reinforce existing partnerships.

Goal 3: Increase the diversity of people using our services by providing stimulating and educational opportunities that increase their cultural awareness and encourage civility.

- A. Work with relevant community organizations to identify and understand the breadth and depth of cultural diversity in our community and partner with them to expand our reach.
 - i. Study current census information for Rockford to determine diverse populations. Share conclusions with all staff.
 - ii. Speak with various social service agencies, community groups, and religious organizations to determine scope of diversity.
 - iii. Create cultural partnerships and ambassadors.
- B. Ensure our existing offerings represent and speak to all segments of our community by identifying and filling gaps to reach all faiths, genders, socio-economic backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and ages.
 - i. Do an organization-wide assessment of what we are currently doing that meets the needs of the entire community.
 - ii. Ensure facilities and programming are accessible to people at all levels of ability.
 - iii. Identify needs gaps and create a plan for filling them.
- C. Celebrate diverse cultures and their traditions through immersive activities and events designed to build empathy and deepen understanding.
 - i. Create a Diversity Calendar for RPL.
 - ii. Enable staff to educate themselves and become more knowledgeable about the many diverse cultures surrounding our communities.
 - iii. Educate the community by creating events and activities based on diverse cultures.
 - iv. Curate library- wide displays that would help strengthen cultural awareness in the community.
 - v. Create a library environment that reflects the people served.
- D. Generate renewed focus on civility in our community, leveraging existing and new programs.
 - i. Reengage RPL's leadership of 815 Choose Civility.

- ii. Strengthen committee, reaching out to new partners that are representative of our whole community.
- iii. Collect and share personal stories about civility on 815 Choose Civility Facebook page and for quarterly in-person or online events.

Goal 4: Maximize use of internal library resources by identifying, collecting, and using data and voice of the customer to evaluate and adjust our services.

- A. Create a framework and platform for collecting and analyzing qualitative input from our customers as well as quantitative data from operations and surveys.
 - i. Identify and consider existing platforms for collecting and accessing data by understanding what is used by other libraries.
 - ii. Evaluate options in conjunction with the management team based on pre-determined criteria.
 - iii. Test platforms with concrete scenarios for ease of use, flexibility to customize, and power/usefulness of analysis.
 - iv. Acquire and implement most appropriate platform
 - v. Train staff and publicize the platform to those who will use it.
- B. Empower front-line staff to effectively collect and capture useful voice of the customer input.
 - i. Identify and catalog available channels and determine recording mechanisms for VOC input.
 - ii. Determine talk track, train staff, and incentivize them to engage with customers effectively for feedback.
 - iii. Identify and implement mechanisms for gathering VOC from the broadest possible set of both customers and non-customers.
 - iv. Understand best practices to drive community engagement and implement those best for RPL.
- C. Understand and articulate who is not using the library and what services they most need.
 - i. Identify population that is not using the Library.
 - ii. Create opportunities to interface with future customers to determine why they do not use the library: time, unaware, nothing of value, too difficult to use, etc.
 - iii. Use untapped market analysis to help identify which services to promote through which channels to increase reach.
 - iv. Create continuous refresher program that helps educate staff on services the Library has in order to assist with communicating
 - v. Evaluate resource usage on a 3-year cycle to determine perceived value and whether to continue that resource
- D. Enable our team, through training and encouragement, to consider data and voice of the customer feedback as a guide for their decision-making.
 - i. Create an assessment for gauging existing data literacy in the library as it pertains to each role.

- ii. Create a rubric of what information is needed for each role in the organization to make use of the data.
- iii. Provide a mechanism for refreshers of data literacy by role throughout the year.
- iv. Create an environment that rewards utilizing data to improve library processes or efforts.
- v. Review data training and use patterns to determine methods of making data more useful as well as to identify what other data could be collected.