



**WASHINGTON COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY**

Where People & Possibilities Meet

Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Preparing for our future; strategic planning 2016

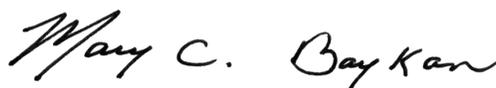
The Washington County Free Library's strategic plan for 2017-2020 is a response to our **community's aspirations and concerns about the future.** Driven by the Harwood Institute's process of community conversations we learned what are our community hopes for and values; as well as its apprehensions and fears. We also heard ideas for change and identified trusted community partners who could lead us into the future.

Over 100 people from business, community benefit organizations, local government, Friends of the Library, and community members participated in our community conversations. This countywide perspective steered our crafting of the strategic plan. While there were many shared goals and values each community differed in certain respects and that too has been reflected in our areas of focus.

The purpose of this plan is to chart the direction of the Washington County Free Library for the next **four years.** **The plan outlines the Library's blueprint for services in the identified areas of education, workforce development and civic engagement.**



John Schnebly
President Board of Trustees



Mary C. Baykan
Library Director

Our thanks to the following members of the strategic planning committee:

Mary Baykan, David Hanlin, Shannon Kraushaar, Kathleen O'Connell, Janlee Viands and Patricia Wishard

We would also like to thank the over 100 participants of our community conversations for their invaluable input, creativity and generosity of spirit.

Strategic Focus 1: Washington County Free Library is an integral component of the educational infrastructure of our community and a leading provider of self directed learning

Washington County Free Library is committed to supporting learning at all stages of life and all levels of literacy. The Library encourages student success in school and enhances self-directed and incremental learning for children, teens and adults outside of formal education. Early learning is a primary focus in our community and our library.

Priority 1: The Library will be an Early Literacy Champion

- In response to the low number of students entering kindergarten ready to learn (36%, 2015) the library system will focus on early learning activities. The children’s services staff will expand and concentrate on designing age-appropriate programs to enhance Birth to Five Literacy levels and develop kindergarten readiness skills.
- Children’s public service staff will utilize the Every Child Ready to Read curriculum to provide resources and programs that train parents and care givers in the use of talking, singing, reading, writing and playing as tools for teaching early literacy skills.
- Children’s public service staff will be trained in developing and delivering developmentally appropriate programming for children.
- All staff will be encouraged to promote library card ownership by children and their families.
- The Library will focus resources on activities that foster parent engagement in early childhood learning.
- Children’s public service staff will continue to develop and implement programs and services that foster a love of books, reading and learning. To this end the library will explore ways to allow young children to borrow books fine free as part of the Summer Reading Club



Priority 2: The Library will advocate for K-12 learning and succeeding.

- Staff will continue to strengthen relationships with the Washington County Public Schools using the CLASS Partnership agreement to foster and enhance student achievement
- The Fletcher Branch will continue as the school library of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts.
- The Library will continue to partner with the schools on special programs such as National History Day and One Maryland One Book.
- **Children’s public service staff will continue to work with the schools and other organizations to enhance afterschool and out-of-school learning activities**
- **Children’s public service staff will continue to provide a rigorous summer reading course with online and in library resources, classes and school involvement to address the “summer slide”, support grade level reading and promote reading for pleasure. The library will also explore the idea of a “fine free” summer reading project. Books checked out as part of the Summer Reading Club would not have fines attached if they are returned after the due date.**
- **Children’s and Teen’s public service staff will continue to enhance and support school-aged and teen STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) classes.**
- The Library will provide and promote online homework and other educational resources.
- The Library will explore the idea of a LINK style program, modeled on programs in other libraries, where all students enrolled in the public schools automatically get public library privileges by using their student ID as their library card. Students can use public library databases, computers and may checkout 3 books fine free.
- Library staff will continue to participate in the community wide educational support efforts such as On-Track and the Early Childhood Advisory Council.



Priority 3: The Library will promote reading and self-directed learning for all.

- Recognizing that learning occurs at every stage of life (infant to adulthood) the library will promote reading and learning in all of its endeavors.
- Promote reading for pleasure through our book clubs, both in person and online, author visits, special displays and events and partnerships with other organizations.
- Continue to develop and offer leading-edge technology instruction and educational opportunities in cooperation with public, private and non-profit partners.
- Continue to expand and augment opportunities for creative experimentation using new and old technologies with all library users. Begin to incorporate maker experiences into adult courses as they **have been included in teen and children's activities. Explore the concept of a maker space for learners of all ages.**
- Continue to enhance life skills classes: for example, financial literacy and basic computer skills to help address knowledge gaps that may exist in adult learners across a wide breadth of subject areas using staff from the library and in partnership with other agencies.
- Augment existing self-directed instructional opportunities for lifelong learners using online resources, cultural lectures and partnerships exploring the creation of alternative pathways to learning. This could include offering credentialing and certification that recognize sources outside schools and formal educational institutions.
- Build and maintain relevant, current and accessible digital and print collections that offer access to information and support reading for pleasure in a variety of formats and environments.



Strategic Focus 2: The Washington County Free Library will support workforce development and the economic well-being of all Washington County citizens.

The Washington County Free Library is committed to the economic development and growth of our community. The library is an integral part of the local workforce infrastructure providing classes in financial, computer and digital literacy, space for adult education classes and participating in community-wide economic development activities.

Priority 1: The Library will provide educational opportunities for workforce literacy and skills.

- Continue to provide one-on-one job search and resume coaching activities.
- Continue to offer classes in computer and basic workforce skills.
- Ensure that staff are trained in job search skills, resume writing and computer competencies to assist people looking for jobs.

Priority 2: The Library will collaborate with community organizations, both public and private, to promote jobs and economic development in our county.

- Partner with the Washington County One Stop Job Center and the Western Maryland Consortium to offer workforce training, job search and resume coaching and special events targeted at job seekers.
- Continue to partner with organizations such as Greater Hagerstown, the Chamber of Commerce, the Homeless Coalition and Washington County Public Schools Diversity Committee to grow the library's capacity for training, resource development, community outreach and programming to support the economic well being of all of our communities.



Strategic Focus 3: The Washington County Free Library is a vital and strategic civic resource for all our citizens

The library is a collaborator in building a strong, interconnected, diverse community. It will be a place for the community to work together, gather, engage and explore public and civic issues. Serving all residents from infants to seniors and providing technology, education, information, research and cultural enrichment; the library is uniquely situated to become a public laboratory for our citizens to learn about each other and their world and work together to forge a robust, thriving society and region.

Priority 1: The Library will provide spaces, services, classes and resources for all with emphasis on the needs of each library community.

- Provide library services for a culturally diverse population.
- Develop classes that incorporates the multicultural and diverse perspectives of each of our communities.
- Continue to develop and enhance multi-generational and family programming, classes and activities.
- Provide ongoing humanities programming that encourages creativity, critical thinking, the ability to reason, cultural understanding and acceptance.
- Maintain the high quality of research assistance through continual staff training and education.

Priority 2: The Library will anticipate and be responsive to community aspirations and needs, both current and future.

- Regularly conduct community conversations to discover the aspirations and needs of our communities. **The library's responses to these needs will be varied and focused outward on the needs of the community.** Communicate the findings from these conversations to the community and its leaders.
- Ask for customer and staff feedback to measure customer satisfaction and experience.
- Explore and expand current outreach efforts to underserved communities and individuals.
- Develop enhanced communication methods, both for the purpose of disseminating information out from the library and also for the purpose of facilitating connections within the community.

Priority 3: The Library will endeavor to increase its ability to respond to community aspirations and needs by forming and/or strengthening partnerships and alliances with other organizations and institutions.

- Collaborate with other public libraries in the state to increase the quality of resources, classes, programs and services.
- Revisit the CLASS Partnership with the Washington County Public Schools.
- **Continue to partner with organizations who support the library's mission and goals such as the Bester Community of Hope, the Washington County Mediation Center, the Maryland Humanities Council, Maryland Public Libraries and the Maryland Division of Library Development & Services.**
- **Seek out relationships with other agencies and organizations that have similar goals to the library's and who support the library's activities and outcomes.**
- Begin to use outcome based measurement to track progress.

Our Mission:

The Washington County Free Library is committed to building a strong, interconnected, diverse community by bringing people, information and ideas together.

Our Vision:

To nurture a vibrant, collaborative, educated and diverse community.

Strategic Focus 1:

Washington County Free Library is an integral component of the educational infrastructure of our community and a leading provider of self-directed learning

Strategic Focus 2:

The Washington County Free Library will support workforce development and the economic well-being of all Washington County citizens.

Strategic Focus 3:

The Washington County Free Library is a vital and strategic civic resource for all our citizens.



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