

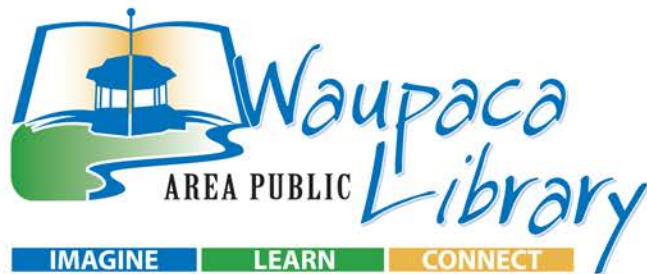
LEARN

WAUPACA AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2024

CONNECT

IMAGINE



IMAGINE

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CONNECT

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Waupaca Area Public Library is located in the City of Waupaca with a municipal population of 6,069. The surrounding area, roughly the school district of Waupaca, is calculated at 15,837. Waupaca is the County seat and is located at the far south western portion of the County. The surrounding towns of Waupaca, Farmington, Dayton and Lind are mostly in the Waupaca School District and rely on the Waupaca Library for services. Rural Waupaca County residents are responsible for about 36% of total circulation of physical items. Consequently the Library receives revenue from Waupaca County for serving rural patrons which constitutes about half of the tax revenue received.

Since Waupaca is located at the border of two counties, Portage to the west and Waushara to the south, the Library realizes a considerable amount of cross county borrowing. Portage County residents are responsible for about 10% (based on the 2019 monthly average) of total circulation of physical items. Current state statutes do not require funding from Portage County, which operates a consolidated County Library. Waushara County reimburses the Library for serving their residents at 70% of the calculated cost.

The Library generated the first Strategic Plan in

2003. The Staff and Board recognized the plan as a roadmap that identified and addressed community needs and have participated in a planning process almost every five years since. In 2019 a unique opportunity presented itself. WiLS (a nonprofit organization that supports libraries in Wisconsin) convened a group of small libraries to work on a planning process with support from the consultants in their organization. WiLS provided the structure, tools and a timeline to move the planning process forward.

The Planning Team utilized Census Data; questionnaires for community leaders and area educators; SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) Activities; Community Surveys; Wisconsin State Standards for Libraries; and Community Conversations to determine the current needs of Waupaca.

Data from the State of Wisconsin recognizes a large population who live in poverty with 40% of school children eligible for free or reduced lunch. The service area is predominantly Caucasian with a very small percentage of people of Hispanic heritage (less than 2%).

The survey results indicate a large percentage of users satisfied with the services the Library currently offers. Those surveyed predominantly responded that the Library is important to the community.





"I love this library! The staff is unfailingly courteous, helpful, friendly, welcoming, resourceful, & steadfast. As a person, long retired and up in years, I say: to have this staff, the library, with all of its resources available to use, the Outagamie Library System support, is the valuable gift to my keeping my brain alive, and to my daily enrichment. Our Waupaca community is beyond fortunate to have this public library!"

"This is the most impressive small-town library I have ever visited. Employees here are dedicated to innovation and excellence. I feel fortunate to live in Waupaca where continuing education and programming and resources for all ages are a priority at the library!"

The most often voiced complaints were about the book drop and the parking lot.

"Parking behind the library is difficult to use."

"The drop box location is inconvenient since it was moved. Getting out and back out or park really defeats the purpose of a 'drive by' drop box. Please consider this for elderly people and after hours when getting out of vehicle at night is not desirable."

"The back parking lot is terrible. It is not big enough to drive a suburban. The new drop off in the back is not convenient. The designated space to park is too small and there is NO room to back up. I drop off my children all summer long to VOLUNTEER at your library. When you re-did the parking lot you took away the convenient drop off and pick up area. It is a HASSLE to drop my children off to volunteer"

There were several recurring themes noted in the Community Conversations. The Waupaca Library is a trusted, safe place to make connections. They aspired to have an open-minded citizenry without judgement. The Community would celebrate the uniqueness of individuals and welcome all people imparting a deep sense of belonging that would address those feeling isolated, unwelcome, or disadvantaged. The Library is seen as the "social connectedness" center for the entire Community.

To sum up the Community Conversations: Student Library Advisory Group (SLAG)

- People need to be more open-minded.
- The Library can never get rid of "safe space"

Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

- Inclusiveness/non-judgement; Celebrate uniqueness of everyone
- More informal connections to support one another
- Events to bring people together
 - Connections—all-welcomed
 - Nonjudgmental

Waupaca Area Ministerial Group

- Safe environment
- Welcoming, Sanctuary City
- A collaborative community that works together
- Connectedness
- Be an open community

Senior Citizens at Waupaca Recreation Center

- Thinking – more open to global ideas
- Fewer isolated people

Emerging Adults

- Looking for a space to socialize that they can call their own
- Want to feel comfortable
- Able to connect with others in their age group

Libraries are no longer representative of traditional literacy, or books. They have been deeply impacted by rapidly evolving and increasingly valued technology. Public libraries are filling a critical role in helping their patrons understand multiple literacies: yes, the written word, but also digital literacy, math literacy, civic literacy, financial literacy. They have

become the place of out-of-school learning for a person's whole lifetime. Our surveys have shown that the Waupaca Area Public Library has done a good job of keeping up with changing technology. Our circulation of digital materials is steadily increasing and our personal engagement in helping patrons navigate their devices is a popular service.

Having the right staff to meet the needs of the community is necessary to being the community resource hub, for all who are looking for information in so many ways. Staff understand their roles in improving the lives of those we serve and building a stronger, more resilient community. The library as a place for people to gather and socialize has clearly been communicated. Our library goal of conveners and facilitators of important conversations offers our community the connections it needs.

MISSION STATEMENT - VALUES

TAGLINE

Imagine, Learn, Connect

MISSION

The Waupaca Area Public Library is committed to offering opportunities for connection, innovation and engaged learning.

VISION

The Waupaca Area Public Library will be known as the community resource that promotes innovation, technology, collaboration, connectedness and all forms of literacy.

VALUES

Waupaca Area Public Library strives to be:

Inclusive - opening doors for increasing engagement

Responsive – collaborating with partners to meet community needs

Respectful – a welcoming environment, open yet private

Accessible – by offering up-to-date technology and resources available to all

Connected - starting conversations and creating community

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

PROJECT TEAM:

Peg Burington - *Library Director*

Sue Abrahamson - *Youth Services Librarian*

Jeanne Bootz - *Super Patron*

Holly Olsen - *Library Board President / School District Teacher*

Tricia Deuman - *School District Educational Coach*

THE TEAM UTILIZED:

- Census records
- Integrated Library System data
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction – Library Annual Report data
- Wisconsin State Standards for Libraries
- Library User Survey
- Waupaca School District Educators Survey
- Questionnaire for Community Leaders
- SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations & Results) Exercise with Library Staff
- Community Conversations with:
 - Waupaca County Health and Human Services Staff
 - Waupaca Senior Center Members
 - Waupaca Ministerial Association
 - Waupaca Library Teens – Student Library Advisory Group
 - Teen Staff Members
 - Emerging adults who utilize the Library



GOAL #1 ACCESS

STATEMENT : *Create better ACCESS to Library Services for the community*



OBJECTIVES

Update Facilities to make the Library building more accessible by adopting Wisconsin Library Standards, Inclusive Services Initiative, and Federal ADA requirements.



ACTIVITIES

- Work with other City Departments to make the parking lot safer and easier to use
- Work with other City Departments to relocate the book drop for ease of use
- Work with other City Departments to adapt existing book drop to meet ADA requirements
- Work with City Departments to make bathroom doors accessible to those with limited mobility
- Investigate additional directional signage for the Library (wayfinding)



SUPPORTING DATA & INFORMATION (WHY?)

Current book return options do not meet ADA compliance. There are three outdoor depositories. The two located on the building are too high off the ground to be reached by someone in a wheelchair or with limited mobility. The drop located in the parking lot is less accessible to those with smaller vehicles or those of shorter stature. The current location does not offer a "drive through" option. Of the 250 people who took the survey administered for planning purposes, the most often voiced complaints were about the book drop and the parking lot.



ASSESSMENT: MEASURE FOR SUCCESS

- Survey library patrons after changes have been implemented
- Increase in library visits
- Increase in circulation of physical items
- Increase in use of parking lot book drop



OBJECTIVES

Increase Hours of operation to better meet the needs of community members.



ACTIVITIES

- Work with library staff and board to add five hours a week to current schedule over the next five years
- Work with Library Staff and Library Board to increase hours on Friday evenings until 6 pm (2020)
- Work with Library Staff and Board to increase hours open on Saturdays by one hour- open hours from 9am to 3pm (2021)
- Survey community members to determine the best way to implement Sunday hours (2021) hours to be implemented in 2022



SUPPORTING DATA & INFORMATION (WHY?)

In evaluating the Library based on the Wisconsin State Standards for Libraries, the open hours (57 hours per week) were deficient, less than the 40th percentile for libraries with similar service populations. Similarly, a comparison with four other libraries of similar size (based on 2017 annual report data) found the Waupaca Library had the least annual hours. Local educator survey response (May 2019) "I have stopped by a few times for a quiet place to work, but it's been closed..."

Staff SOAR Activity included:

- Opportunities:
 - "Programming: After 5 and weekend programming"
 - "Facilities: Hours of operation, longer hours, additional weekend hours"



ASSESSMENT: MEASURE FOR SUCCESS

- Measure visits during hours added
- Survey patrons on response to added hours



OBJECTIVES

Remove Barriers by changing policies and procedures that restrict use of library services.



ACTIVITIES

- Implement policy for fine free use (no overdue fees) of teen and children's items (2020)
- Investigate eliminating fines on other material types (2021)
- Explore the idea of "Clean slate" for overdue fees
- Work with OWLS to allow online renewal of library accounts
- Explore options for a procedure for staff to accept payment of bills or fees with a credit or debit card at a library service desk
- Implement procedures that increase the ease of use of study and meeting spaces
- Designate areas for quiet reading and study – restrict cell phone use in these areas
- Investigate ways to provide services to patrons that have transportation challenges



SUPPORTING DATA & INFORMATION (WHY?)

Recently there has been a movement towards libraries adopting policies that eliminate overdue fees. Dawn Wacek from La Crosse Wisconsin makes the point that charging overdue fees does not advance the mission of libraries. "Libraries have the power to create a better world; they connect communities, promote literacy and spark lifelong learners. But there's one thing that keeps people away: the fear of overdue book fines."

Community conversations validated the idea that overdue fees create barriers for those who have limited resources. Elimination of overdue fees will allow equitable use of the library for all community members. The Library held "fine forgiveness" in June 2019. Postcards were sent to 564 active or recently expired patrons who had overdue fees in excess of \$5.00. Of those contacted 119 people had their library privileges restored.

ASSESSMENT: MEASURE FOR SUCCESS



- Repeat the survey one year after initiatives
- Patron response to changes
- Track visits on new hours
- Track checkouts based on new hours and increased access
- More active patrons - fewer accounts blocked for delinquency
- Number of new patrons
- Decrease in number of patrons blocked because of overdue fees
- Circulation of physical items should increase
- Daily visits should increase

GOAL #2 MARKETING

STATEMENT : *Increase awareness of Library services*



OBJECTIVES

- Use **Social Media** to inform and gain feedback
- Utilize **Traditional Media** sources to inform the public about services and programs
- Encourage staff and library champions to use **Word-of-Mouth** to create excitement and awareness of library offerings



ACTIVITIES

- Continue to use Facebook to promote services and offerings
- Investigate new technologies to reach a broader audience
- Instagram | Twitter | Pinterest | Snapchat
- Write a weekly column for the local newspaper
- Use the City and local radio stations for getting the word out
- Send a welcome letter or postcards to new patrons
- Use Chamber of Commerce calendar to promote events and services
- Offer tours to new library patrons
- Encourage realtors to show/drive by library when showing homes
- Train staff, volunteers and super patrons to advocate for the Library



SUPPORTING DATA & INFORMATION (WHY?)

Survey responses indicate that even the people who use the library the most are unaware of all the library has to offer. Library staff have observed that the adult senior population do not know that the library offers magazines, current newspapers, ebooks and provides assistance with computer questions. "Most patrons are unaware that they could request books online through Infosoup."

From the Issues and Needs Survey:

" People do not necessarily think of the library as something other than a place to check out a book."



ASSESSMENT: MEASURE FOR SUCCESS

- Survey library patrons
- Track number of new cardholders and new patron use of library services
- Track social media responses

GOAL #3 THE LIBRARY AS COMMUNITY CONNECTOR THROUGH COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Develop programs and services that utilize community resources to increase offerings and provide opportunities for engagement for all community members



OBJECTIVES

Provide **Outreach** services to organizations offsite

Increase **Social Connectedness** by intentionally adapting existing or adding new programs/services that bring community members together

Continue to work with area educators to provide **School Connectedness**

Encourage **Life-long Learning** by utilizing community spaces and resources to provide programming that helps to meet 21st Century needs



ACTIVITIES

- Investigate partnering with existing organizations with similar missions to provide intergenerational programs.
- Investigate ways to provide services to patrons that have transportation challenges.
- Provide infant and toddler library services at daycare sites.
- Explore opportunities to provide services in nontraditional venues.
- Work with Thedacare CHAT to promote connectedness in our community.
- Host Community Read with books promoting connectedness.
- Work with DHHS to provide training for businesses and organizations on trauma informed care.
- Provide programs and space for parents to network.
- Create library spaces designed for discussion and engagement
- Work with other community organizations to provide a volunteer clearinghouse to utilize talents and connect people with opportunities for involvement.
- Add links to library services in teacher/school newsletters.
- Reinforce tech education at the library.
- Work together on special events, exhibits, author visits, etc.
- Investigate increased programming for early elementary school students.
- Target emerging adults to make library use a habit.
- Involve teens who are aging out of Teen Room to assist in providing services and programs for others in their age group.
- Create opportunities that bring people together to talk about community issues.
 - Book clubs
 - Discussion series
 - Documentary film series



SUPPORTING DATA & INFORMATION (WHY?)

Conversations with community focus groups and survey responses were clear indicators that the library is already seen as a source of information. People also spoke passionately about their struggles to know about events and opportunities in the Waupaca area where they can find positive engagement and support with others in the community.

Human beings are social creatures. Connection to others enables us to survive and thrive. Yet, as a person ages, many are alone more often than when they were younger, leaving them vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness – and related health problems such as cognitive decline, depression, and heart disease. (National Institute on Aging/National Institutes of Health; www.nia.nih.gov)

- *Sara Reybrock, Senior Center Director, requested the library’s help in building a “dementia friendly” community.*
- *Religious leaders from the community recognized the need for a “collaborative, open community that will work together.”*

Working smarter together includes active collaboration with key area agencies: schools, churches, health and human services, businesses, aging populations, etc. Building multi-generational library programs, or similar programs co-sponsored by library outreach services, to assist engagement and interaction would meet the needs of the community.

- *Christine Faulks requests for outreach story time at Bethany Home so that her 90-year old mother can enjoy children and stories.*

Our world has become increasingly divided and citizens have lost faith in their role in solving local, regional, national and global issues. Providing a venue for honest and respectful discussion that celebrates everyone’s unique voice can help build a social infrastructure that will strengthen neighborhoods and municipalities.

It came as no surprise that the demographic data reviewed in the planning process showed a large segment of our population being over 60 years of age. What did surprise us is that the largest demographic group was the 24-34 year olds. Providing activities for people in this age group to stay connected surfaced quickly as a key opportunity to explore. This age group is busy with work and possibly young families. Identifying topics of interest and their preferred educational and entertainment needs is key to the success of any future endeavor.

- *Young adults who have aged out of the popular “Teen Room” have been clearly voicing their desire for a comfortable place in the library as “social refuge.”*

Educators have shared with library staff their concern over family engagement in the ever advancing world of technology and social media. Parents are seeking more information about ways they can best help their children be good digital citizens, i.e. setting boundaries, game and app reviews, modeling, etc. The library role as media mentor is well documented and supported by the American Library Association and the Wisconsin Library Association.



ASSESSMENT: MEASURE FOR SUCCESS

- Utilize outcome surveys to measure engagement
- Measure attendance at new programs aimed at engagement

GOAL #4 INCLUSIVE SERVICES

STATEMENT : *Create a library environment and accompanying programs that are welcome to all.*



OBJECTIVES

Increase staff awareness of the needs of **Inclusive Services** as outlined by the Department of Public Instruction
Change the environment to create a culture of belonging for everyone

SUPPORTING DATA & INFORMATION (WHY?)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Inclusive Services Statement

Wisconsin public libraries are places where everyone should be safe, welcomed, and respected in experiences including, but not limited to:



- Arrival at the building (transportation, physical accessibility, signage, hours of service, greetings by library staff)
- Intersections with library policies (getting a library card, using a computer, paying a fine)
- Perusal, use, and request of library materials (Wi-Fi access, collection diversity, individual privacy)
- Participation in library-sponsored or library-located events (marketing of events, time and location, transportation, registration, room set-up, novice-friendly vs. designed for frequent users)
- Interactions with library staff (body language, tone, diversity of library staff, proactive/reactive engagement)
- Passive and virtual interactions through library signage, webpages, displays, and marketing (readability, tone, diversity, accommodations).

ACTIVITIES

- Educate staff on inclusive services
- Identify gaps for inclusive services
- Identify staff to serve on a committee to brainstorm ideas for future implementation
- Collect materials that demonstrate diversity
- Implement inclusive services initiatives with Library Staff



ASSESSMENT: MEASURE FOR SUCCESS



- Staff will be trained in Inclusive Services
- Committee formed to create inclusive services initiatives and intended outcomes
- Initiatives meet intended outcomes

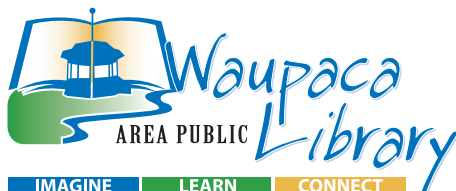
ONGOING PLANNING

The complete activity and implementation plan is being created by the staff management team and will serve as an implementation guide during the life of this plan. The ongoing planning process for the library will include project management, assessment, communication and ongoing prioritization of activities to ensure the goals of the plan are realized with the flexibility to adapt as needed. The library will follow the following annual process and schedule to implement the strategic plan.

The Library Director and staff will work in conjunction with the Library Board of Trustees to prioritize, and coordinate activities from this plan. The library will consider available resources, including funding and staff time; changing conditions locally, regionally and statewide; and opportunities that arise to innovate during the implementation of the plan.

APPENDICES

- Staff SOAR Activity
- Senior Center Community Conversation
- Student Library Advisory Group Community Conversation
- Waupaca Area Ministerial Association Community Conversation
- Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services Community Conversation
- Teen Staff Focus Group
- Community Leaders Questionnaire
- PLA Report on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice
<http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/edi>
- TED TALK: A Librarian's Case Against Overdue Fines
https://www.ted.com/talks/dawn_wacek_a_librarian_s_case_against_overdue_book_fines?language=en
- ADA Standards
https://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm
- Wisconsin Public Library Standards
<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/library-standards>
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Inclusive Services
<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/inclusive-services>



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- Sue Abrahamson - *Youth Services Librarian*
- Holly Olsen - *Teacher / Library Board Member*
- Tricia Dueman - *Educational Coach for Waupaca School District*
- Jeanne Bootz - *Library Supporter / Super Grandma*

With Assistance provided by:

WiLS is a non-profit membership organization that facilitates collaborative projects and services to save our members time and money and to advance library service, primarily in the state of Wisconsin. Most of our members are libraries, but we also work with cultural institutions, government agencies, and other non-profits to develop partnerships and projects.

- Bruce Smith - WiLS
- Melissa McLimans - WiLS

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- Bradley Shipp - OWLS (Outagamie Waupaca Library System) Director

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2018-19 Library Board of Trustees

- Holly Olsen
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- Lori Chesnut, City Council
- Mary Zimmermann
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- Waupaca Ministerial Association
- Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services
- Members of the Waupaca Senior Center
- Waupaca Library Student Library Advisory Group
- Teen Staff at the Waupaca Area Public Library